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The Local Biz Magazine

Autumn 2020

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In This Issue

8 **Keeping Children Safe** Diana Trepkov
13 **Finding Calm in the Chaos** Shelby Leith
18 **A Changing Workforce** Naftali Clinton

Regular Features
21 **Autumn Events Calendar**
22 **At The Box Office** Stephanie Herrera
23 **Soul Searching** Tara Richardson
24 **Get Fit: Inside & Out** Bianca Schaefer
25 **Tweens, Teens & In-Between** Sarah Malik
26 **Family Matters** Josie Myers
27 **A Forkful of Healthy** Wendy Lee
28 **Finance & Real Estate Insights** Nicole Forrester
29 **Ask Sue-Ann** Sue-Ann Bavinka
30 **The Coach Corner** Malachi Brown
31 **The Golden Years** Linda Calder
32 **Horoscope** Julie Antoinette



From the Publisher

It's been an interesting summer, and it seems to have flown by so fast, but I'm sure you'll agree that with COVID-19, it was a very different summer from previous ones. On some level, it feels like things are back to normal now that everything is reopening or reopened already, but at the same time, we all know it's a "new normal" because COVID-19 is still looming in the background.

It's been a challenging few months for businesses as well, especially small, local businesses that we at *The Local Biz Magazine* like to support. Due to lockdown restrictions this past spring and summer, many businesses had to reduce hours and staff, while others had to completely shut down. Here at the magazine, we too had to adapt. Due to the lack of businesses being open we decided to do a digital-only summer issue which I hoped you accessed online through our FB page and website.

We're slowly getting back into the swing of things, and I hope you check out the awesome content we have for you this issue. Find out what our regular columnists are up to on page 24 onwards.

Something unique to this issue is a feature article written by a forensic artist, victims advocate, and keynote speaker about her work in forensics, specifically missing children cases. It's a very engaging read. In it, she also provides tips for parents on how to keep your children safe. Check out Diana Trepkov's article, *Keeping Children Safe...Through the Eyes of a Forensic Artist* on page 8 of the magazine.

I hope you enjoy reading our Fall 2020 issue. Feel free to share your thoughts on it with us. You can connect with us through our website www.thelocalbizmagazine.ca and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/thelocalbizmagazine) page.

Stay safe everyone.

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher



From the Editor

It's been an interesting spring and summer with life as we know it being turned upside down thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's early August when I'm writing this letter and life is returning to some sort of normalcy as COVID restrictions are being eased across the country; Durham Region is now in Stage 3 of reopening. I can once again eat inside a restaurant or workout in a gym if I choose, but I've got an even bigger decision to make.

With back-to-school looming, I've been asked a few times if I will send my son back to school in September. I don't know the answer to that question yet, and neither do a lot of my friends with school-aged kids. It's a tough decision to make for many parents. And sadly, some parents may not even have a choice because they have to go back to work.

These are unprecedented times we're living in, and I don't think anyone truly knows how to navigate this situation. We do the best we can, and make the best decisions we can with the information we have. If you're feeling anxious with everything that's going on (and rest assured you're not the only one), I think you'll find Shelby Leith's article, *Finding Calm in the Chaos: How to Deal with the Stress of COVID* a helpful read.

Finally, if you happen to be one of the lucky few still working remotely, check out Naftali Clinton's article, *A Changing Workforce* for tips on how to set up your office space so you can maximize your efficiency and productivity while working from the comfort of your own home.

As always, I hope you enjoy reading the Fall 2020 issue of *The Local Biz 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.

Wendy Chiavalon
Editor-in-Chief

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KEEPING CHILDREN SAFETHROUGH THE EYES OF A FORENSIC ARTIST

by Diana Trepkov

We like to think we live in a safe world, but that is the furthest thing from the truth. People with missing loved ones endure so many sleepless nights, fraught with worry. Wondering what happened to their missing family members and/or friends, where they are, and what can be done to locate them.

What is Forensic Art?

According to www.crimesceneinvestigatoredu.org, forensic art is an artistic technique used for identification, apprehension or conviction purposes. Forensic artists work with law enforcement officers to identify suspects and victims. During a criminal investigation, a forensic artist may:

- Sketch composites of criminal suspects
- Recreate skeletal, decomposed, or mutilated images using 2-D and 3-D computer imagery
- Sketch composites from decomposed or partially decomposed remains
- Create age progression sketches of suspects and missing persons
- Prepare diagrams, chart evidence boards and 3-D reconstructions of crime scenes for court hearings and other judicial proceedings

- Prepare reports, exhibits and displays for court proceedings
- Artistically enhance or alter surveillance photographs

Forensic artists may also conduct interviews with both witnesses and victims in order to gain information that will help when creating sketches and images of the suspect(s). They also may need to testify in court at times.

A career in forensic art is both fulfilling and sad at the same time, especially when it comes to working on missing children cases. As mentioned, forensic artists create age progressions in missing children cases to help make the cold case current, and also to show the public what the missing loved one would possibly look like today if alive. The police, the Private Investigators, the medical examiners and the families of missing loved ones will often come to a forensic artist as a last resort when they feel the case has gone cold. Age progressions of missing loved ones can help make a case current by utilizing social media and all news outlets worldwide. To date, I have completed 232 law enforcement cold cases. Here are 2 examples of cold case files I've worked on:

Case #1 Abduction of 2.5-year-old Diane Prevost



The Prevost family has been waiting for over 50 years for answers to what really happened to their precious little toddler Diane. She disappeared on September 17th, 1966, Labour Day weekend at Grundy Lake Provincial Park in Sudbury, Ontario. When the police were called in, the search dogs lost her scent in the parking lot near the road. Therefore, she was most likely taken away in a vehicle. The family and I believe she is still out there, but where? Does she even know she was taken at such a young age? I have completed an age progression drawing to her current age in hopes that she may see it one day and recognize herself. I think that if someone were abducted at a young age, they would grow up sensing that something just doesn't feel right. Their intuition would make them think, "I never really felt I belonged to this family, or something always seems off." We will not give up on the search for missing Diane Prevost!

Case #2 Abduction of 9-Year-Old Angie Housman



Angie Housman was only 9 years old. She went missing on November 18, 1993. Her body was found on November 27th, 1993, nine days after she went missing, in Missouri, United States. Sadly, after this happened to Angie, her mom passed away from cancer. I was recently asked to do an age progression for her biological dad Angelo. Once I heard the story of Angie Housman, my heart sank and I wanted to do this as a gift from my heart. The idea was a surprise from his sister and PJ Randhawa (an investigative reporter with NBC St. Louis KSDK News), who had reached out to me to ask if I can do this age progression. This is Angie Housman's age progression to 35 years old. Angie was such a beautiful girl with such an innocent beautiful smile and she had a great sparkle in her eyes. It was important for me to keep her spirit alive in the drawing. Angie's aunt Debbie messaged me that her brother, (Angie's father) made the age progression of Angie for his wallpaper on his phone, and when I read that, tears rolled down my face but they were happy tears! Age progressions can be a nice gift for a family who has lost a love one. There is a group called *Angie's Angels for Justice*. They keep Angie Housman's memory alive and their mission is for Angie to get justice.

Keeping Children Safe

I want to help children stay safe and inform everyone what I have learned in my career as a forensic artist/victims' advocate for the last 15 years. My mission is to prevent a child from going missing. Then all my hard work and efforts have been worth it. Here are my tips to help keep your child(ren) safe.

Firstly, communication is key. Try and talk about absolutely everything with your child at all times. There should be NO secrets.

Positive Affirmations

I believe it is so important to start the day with your child by saying positive affirmations out loud. Some great affirmations are, “I love myself just the way I am, I am smart, I am loved, I am thankful, I am grateful and I am safe”. The reason why it is so important to have them do this is because it will condition them to think positive and nice thoughts about themselves all day. When we think nice thoughts, usually nice things start to happen – it’s a ripple effect.

Intuition

Let a child know that if something doesn’t feel right, then it is not right. It’s important to trust their feelings and not ignore them because that is when bad choices are made. All children have special feelings inside, whether it is a gut feeling or butterflies in their stomach; this is called their instinct or inner voice and that is there to protect them throughout their life! You can tell them a story about how your intuition saved you from a bad experience and guided you to safety.

Secret Word

A secret emergency word is important for every child to know. They should have a special secret word that only their family knows, in case of emergencies. If a child’s parents are not able to pick them up, and someone else is going to pick them up, that person should know the secret family word. For example, a secret word could be “Mexicana.”

A Good Night’s Sleep

It is very important for your child to get a good night’s sleep as this can help your child make wise decisions. If your child has trouble sleeping, try putting on some ocean music, meditation music or birds singing music as any of these nature sounds can help for your child to fall asleep naturally.

Safety Tips

It is also important to have a serious discussion with your child about certain safety tips. The point isn’t to scare them, but it is to help them understand that they need to be careful in life, because sadly, bad things can happen; no one is immune to bad things happening.

- Children should let their parents know where they are at all times. If possible, have a phone with them at all times.
- Always have children familiar with their surroundings. If they are going somewhere new, they should have a trusted adult with them at all times.
- Stay away from strangers. Explain why they should never go anywhere with a stranger because that is when bad things can happen.
- Many children love animals. Offenders can easily lure children with questions like, "Can you help me find my lost puppy?" Some children will be tricked this way into going into a car with a stranger or just walking away with them.



- Don’t take candy, food, drinks, and presents from a stranger.
- Always stay with groups of people and never walk alone at night, especially in pathways or alleys
- Teach children how to call 911, especially if they see a stranger peeking in their window or walking around the house.
- Stay away and say NO to drinking and drugs at all times. Nothing good ever comes from drinking alcohol and taking drugs.
- Avoid dressing your children in clothing with their names on it as an offender can easily trick a child by manipulating their name into a conversation. For example, “Lisa, your mom told me to come and get you because she is ill and she asked for me to take you to her”. A child will most likely believe this story and go with the offender.
- If anyone tries to grab your child and to take them away, they should scream, “you are not my Mom, or you are not my Dad!” Yell “FIRE” or just try and make the biggest loudest noise ever. This will get a lot of attention, which can scare off an offender!



Cyber Predators

Many sexual predators will often stalk children on the Internet, taking advantage of their innocence. Parents should know what their child is doing online, and what they are searching for on the Internet at all times. Have the computer in a public area in your house. This way you can see what your child is doing online at all times. Statistics indicate 1 in 4 children will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18. A child should feel it is okay to come to you as a parent to tell you that something is happening to them.

Some online tips to discuss with your kids:

- Do not visit a chat room without permission.
- Do not agree to meet anyone in person that you met online.
- Do not fill in a profile that asks for your name and address.
- Do not post pictures of yourself without permission.
- Do not send sexually explicit photos to anyone on any digital advice.

Jim Clemente, a retired FBI Profiler that has investigated serial violent and sexual crimes and was also the producer and writer of *Criminal Minds* explained to me on my podcast, that any photo taken with a sexual nature is considered child pornography. Jim is a sexual assault survivor.

The Importance of DNA

Recently, I interviewed CeCe Moore, *The Genetic Detective* and an expert genetic genealogist. She said family members should submit their DNA to 5 databanks like, *23andMe*, *FamilyTreeDNA*, *AncestryDNA*, *MyHeritageDNA* and *GEDmatch*. The reason it is important to submit your DNA into the 5 databanks is because it increases the chances of finding a match.

I have a wish deep within myself, and that is to protect as many children as possible, to help ease the pain that I have witnessed in so many families’ eyes of missing loved one’s. When a child goes missing, it is every parent’s worst nightmare. Nothing is more important to a mother and father than their child’s safety and welfare. While they can’t protect their child 24/7, what they can do is to teach them so they can protect themselves when there is a potential threat. Unfortunately, we do live in a world where scary things can happen and our children are at risk. Sometimes things will happen and we have absolutely no control over it. My heart hurts for all victims of crime, and families of missing loved ones. Let’s all work together as a team to keep children safe!

Diana Trepkov is an accomplished forensic artist, victims' advocate, keynote speaker, and author of five books, which include a forensic art book, and four children's books. She is the creator, producer and host of the podcast, “Can I Help Find Your Missing Loved One?”



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FINDING CALM IN THE CHAOS

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE STRESS OF COVID-19

by Shelby Leith

Stress; it's a word that we are all familiar with. Most of us know far too well the angst brought on by a busy lifestyle. We rush out the door in the morning to wait in traffic, sit through meetings and rush to meet deadlines, then hurry home and race out to practice.

In March of 2020, all of this changed when the requirements of self-quarantine and social distancing forced us to stay home. This situation took away a considerable number of our obligations and responsibilities, and yet, instead of easing our feelings of stress it made many of us feel even more anxious than before. Uncertainty about the future threatened our way of life and left

us feeling out of sorts and unsure how to cope with all of the unknown that lay ahead.

Some of us turned to doctor's who found themselves prescribing a significantly increased number of medications for depression, mood disorders, anxiety and sleeping issues. Others fled to the couch to lose ourselves amongst the cushions and hours of binge-worthy Netflix episodes.

No matter which method you chose, it's undeniable that the vast majority of us made the decision (conscious or not) to distance ourselves, in one way or another, from the reality surrounding us. Suppressing our emotions, all the while suffering more and more from the hazards of untreated stress.

Why is stress so bad for us?

First, let's start off by saying that not all stress is bad. Acute, short term stress can actually be good for us. This particular type of stress triggers what is known as the fight or flight response for a very brief period of time and it is what helps us to survive dangerous situations. It allows us to make important, lifesaving decisions in the blink of an eye. It provides us with the perfect amount of stimulation and adrenaline to power through a tough workout, or gives us the drive and determination needed to achieve a difficult goal.

It is when we are bombarded with daily stress, the kind that follows us around from morning till evening, day after day, that both our bodies and minds start to suffer. This chronic stress takes a toll on us, affecting all areas of our lives and causing a wide variety of different health issues. We may find that the quality of our sleep is diminishing, or worse, we may begin to suffer from insomnia. We will find ourselves feeling tired throughout the day and lacking the energy required to complete our usual tasks. Our moods might begin to suffer. Feelings of anxiety and depression may start to cloud our thoughts. We may suffer the physical discomforts of nausea, diarrhea, tense muscles, headaches, a lowered immune system leading to frequent infections and even a loss of libido. If left untreated, this stress can lead to much more serious problems such as high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes.

Don't let this information stress you out though. It's not too late! Even after months of uncertainty dealing with COVID-19 or perhaps years living a fast-paced, stressful life, there are steps that you can take to ease your anxiety, calm your fears and find peace in every day.

Coping with COVID

Despite the fact that we are dealing with unusual times and life for everyone looks a little different right now, there are many ways to deal with the stress that this uncertainty brings and even learn to flourish and thrive through it.

1. Get your news from a reliable source - As things rapidly evolve around us, it is tempting to seek out reports from as many sources as possible in an attempt to make sense of these ever-changing times. Unfortunately, there is a lot of unreliable information being spread around, providing misinformation. Not only are some of the "facts" out there exaggerated, in some cases they can be completely untrue and downright scary. Make sure that you are getting your information from trusted and relevant places such as www.durham.ca, www.canada.ca and www.who.int. Remember, don't rely on Facebook, Twitter or your neighbour to get important and accurate information. Save yourself the stress and go right to the approved sources.
2. Find things to be grateful for - This one may sound tricky, especially when stress has you in its evil grip. Sometimes when our lives seem out of control it can be difficult to find the silver lining, but no matter how bad we may perceive our situation to be, there is always something to be grateful for. Gratitude is a wonderful way to boost your mood and turn a stressful situation into a positive one. Instead of waiting for Thanksgiving to share all of the things that you are thankful for, try making this a daily routine, one that you share with your spouse and your children. Make it a game of trying to find as many things as possible to give thanks for. "I am grateful to be alive, I am thankful to be in good health, I am grateful to have a delicious breakfast to eat, I am so thankful for hot, running water to shower in, I am thankful for my friends, my family and my pets, I am thankful for the extra time I have at home to spend with the ones I love." Finding things to be grateful for can not only lift your spirits, it can ease your anxiety about the negative aspects of the new

COVID-19 lifestyle that we are all now living. Remember this simple tip; the more positivity that you look for in life, the more positivity that you will find.

3. Embrace the change - Let's face it, change can be hard. It means giving up control and entering into the unknown. It's because of this fact that so many people are struggling during this pandemic. Change has become a daily occurrence in almost all aspects of our lives. We wake up in the morning not knowing what has been altered in our external world and what modifications to our lives we are going to be required to make next. The best way to overcome this fear of the unknown is to look at change as an opportunity to grow and learn. Instead of being afraid, we need to be brave and ready to start out on a new and adventurous quest with a positive and adaptable attitude. We need to be the models of this new outlook for the rest of our family (especially our children) and show them that as long as we stay safe and healthy, (wear your masks and wash your hands!) there is nothing to be afraid of. Children may be nervous about starting school with a different curriculum or new schedule but by showing them your enthusiastic and courageous approach to different situations, you will be able to support them and get them excited about unfamiliar situations that may otherwise feel scary.
4. Make self-care a priority - These days we are hearing more and more about the importance of self-care and for good reason! We are of no use to anyone else if we don't take care of ourselves first! Make sure to schedule some "me" time each and every day. Whether you spend it reading, journaling, taking a bath or working on your hobby, spending time doing something that you love will help reduce stress and will get you in that "feel-good" mood in no time!
5. Practice mindfulness - "Live in the moment!" We have all heard this phrase before, but what exactly does it mean? As a society, we spend the majority of our time thinking of the past or planning out our future, and we rarely take the time to enjoy where we are and what we are doing right now. By being mindful of the present moment, without judgement of what we have done before and without expectation of what will come, we can truly appreciate the here and now without fear or anxiety. If you find yourself getting caught up making future plans, or feeling anxious while waiting in line to get into a store, just stop for a moment and breathe. Look around you and, while taking deep breaths, name 10 things that you can see in your immediate surroundings; "Car, Tree, Flower, Clouds, Bird..." This simple exercise will help ground you and will take you away from your worries and bring your focus on what is surrounding you in the present. Nothing else matters except for this very moment. This moment, right now, is the only moment that you are truly alive so recognize it for what it is, find the joy in it and embrace it!
6. Make meditation a family affair - Study after study has proven that there is no better way to ease stress and calm anxiety than to begin a daily meditation practice. This is especially important now, in these unprecedented times when stress is at an all-time high. Meditation is a great way



to unite your family and no one is too old or too young to participate. There is no right or wrong way to meditate, you don't need special music and you don't need to sit in a special (uncomfortable!) position. What's most important is that you take a few minutes (the longer the better!) out of your busy day to slow down and just breathe. Deep breathing helps to clear the mind, enhance memory and focus, improve sleep, reduce blood pressure and can even help reduce the symptoms of ADHD in children. Try putting on some soft music or nature sounds or even do a simple YouTube search for "Guided Meditations." Just a few minutes a day is proven to make a big difference in how you feel.

Stressed out? Try this!

If you are experiencing the effects of anxiety and stress, try this simple breathing technique that is proven to instantly reduce your heart rate, regulate your breathing and calm your mood in under a minute.

4-7-8 Breathing Technique

First, completely exhale by letting out a big sigh. Ahhhhh!

Next, breath in slowly, counting to 4, hold your breath to the count of 7 and then slowly release to the count of 8. Continue to

repeat this breathing pattern, 4 in, 7 hold, 8 out, for as long as you wish, until you begin to feel calm and relaxed.

By focusing solely on breathing and counting, your body releases all negativity, distracts your attention from worried thoughts and is able to quickly and effectively calm down. This simple technique can be used anywhere and by anyone, plus it's easy to remember!

There is no denying the fact that the times that we are living in right now are challenging. We are all learning to cope with the constant changes in our own unique ways. It is important to remember that letting stress and anxiety take control of our emotions is not only unproductive but it can be extremely detrimental to our health and the health of our loved ones. By learning to identify stressful situations and implementing self-care and mindfulness techniques into our daily schedule, we can help to ensure that we live our best, stress-free lives, and find the calm through the chaos of COVID-19.

Shelby Leith is a healthcare professional and meditation instructor living and working in Durham Region. In her spare time Shelby employs her love of writing to share her knowledge of health and wellness with others in the community, as a freelance writer.



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by Naftali Clinton

The spread of COVID-19 has affected the economy in many different ways. The definition of what is considered “essential” and “non-essential” work changed. Grocery store clerks, cashiers, truck drivers and other typically low-to-mid wage earners became our front-line workers and heroes, alongside hospital workers. Many businesses were forced to close their doors temporarily because of lockdown measures. Some businesses downsized their workforce to account for the lack in sales. Many people lost their jobs.

Yet, amidst all of this, there were a few companies that were successfully able to transition from a traditional physical workplace to a remote workplace. These companies encouraged their employees to work from home as much as possible to slow the spread of this deadly virus. Many employees did just that, and some, are continuing to do so.

The Pros & Cons

Being able to skip the boringness and often long, stressful, commute to and from the office is appealing. As may be the thought of working in your pyjamas (or underwear if you so wish)! What about the idea of being able to set your own work hours throughout the day? You can choose when you want to work, where you want to work, and how you want to work all from the comfort of your own home. The best part is, you still get a paycheck without ever having to leave your house. Seems like a dream come true, doesn't it?

However, working from home isn't all that it seems. I myself work from home because I am a freelance writer, and it is a lot harder than it looks. Firstly, there are many more distractions working from home than in an office, which makes it harder to get work done. Parents who work from home with young children can attest to the struggle to stay focused on work while the kids are around.

Procrastination is also a problem. Without the structure of the physical work environment and workday, it's very easy to lose focus because of all the distractions, and put off tasks that need to be completed. It would be a good idea to lock yourself in your workspace for a few hours at a time to stay focused on your work. (Of course, make sure your kids are always well taken care of before you do this.)

Secondly, it is harder to interact with co-workers on a day to day basis when you don't actually see them in person. Advice and help from co-workers are a very important part of the office life. While you can simply call, e-mail or text them from home, it is certainly not the same as talking to them in person at the office.

Video Conferencing

Zoom has become one of the most popular apps and websites during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is primarily used by businesses for meetings, but teachers are also now using it for remote learning.

There are many advantages to using video conferencing. It is a convenient way to have a meeting as you can be anywhere in the world and experience it real-time. It is also fairly affordable; it only costs money for the person setting up the meeting, and even that is free initially.

It is so convenient that up to 1000 people can join a single meeting at no cost to the people joining. This is one of the major advantages of using Zoom. However, there are also disadvantages such as zoom-bombing, where people hack into a Zoom meeting and put unprofessional content up on it. There may also be connectivity problems, with some people being unable to join a Zoom meeting. These technical issues occurred because of the sheer volume of people using Zoom during the pandemic.

The Work Space

It is very important to have a quality work space at home to stay focused and be as productive as you can possibly be. There are a lot of things that go into a work-from-home space. Here are a few suggestions for what a home workspace should look like, but by all means get creative and think of your own ideas.

1. A good computer: I can't stress enough how important it is to have a good computer in your workspace. A desktop computer is better for productivity for work than using a laptop. Having said that, you don't need to go out and buy a \$1,500 computer for work, it should all be within reason. You can get a fully-functional computer for only a few hundred dollars. If you don't have one yet you can even ask your employer to buy you one.
2. A lamp: This one is very important; however, it doesn't have to be an actual lamp to do the job, the main idea is to have good lighting in your workspace to enable maximum productivity.
3. High-speed Internet access: It's not cheap but it's worth it in the long run. You don't want to get frustrated with low-speed Internet when you're trying to do work. Especially when you may have a time sensitive project that needs to be done, you're going to be counting on the Internet access to be good and efficient.
4. A comfortable chair: This one is extremely important for productivity, but it's also very important from a health standpoint. If you are going to be spending long hours sitting at a desk, you need to invest in a chair that will support your body properly while your work so you don't end up with back/neck/shoulder pain down the road.
5. A phone: If you still use a land-line, it would be a good idea to keep it near your workspace. If you don't have a land-line anymore, simply place your cell phone right near your workspace. Convenient right?



6. A printer: It can be a real pain to have to go halfway across the house (or even out to a store!) to retrieve your printed work. That's why having a printer is an ideal way to increase productivity in your home workspace.
7. A backup power supply: This is more of a precaution than a need, but just in case there is a blackout in your neighbourhood this will protect you from losing all your work.

Productivity Apps

In the age of the smartphone, there are many productivity and time-management apps that can go hand in hand with the ideal workspace laid out above. Some apps are free, while others may involve a fee. These apps can help improve your workflow in different ways. For instance, some apps help you stay focused, some improve your habits, while some apps help you get organized. A great article that will help you find the app(s) right for you can be found at, www.ventureharbour.com/best-productivity-apps/

Conclusion

The pandemic necessitated the transition to remote work, but it may be a long-term trend for some companies. It's hard to say at this point what the future will hold, but if your company is moving to a remote workplace, I hope this article helps you in the momentous task of moving from the office to your own home.

Naftali Clinton currently resides in Toronto, Canada. He is a hockey writer and his work can be found on SenShot. He can also be found on Twitter (at) [NaftaliClinton](https://twitter.com/NaftaliClinton).

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Autumn Events Calendar

Usually, our Fall Events calendar is filled with event listings. Unfortunately, this year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many events have either been postponed or cancelled altogether. Although things are starting to return to some sort of normalcy, there is still a lot of uncertainty in the air. As a result, some events are now taking place virtually instead of in-person. Below, is a listing of events originally planned for the months of September and October in Durham Region. While we are optimistic that these events do continue as planned, we suggest you contact the event organizer directly to determine the status of the event.

In the event that social distancing is still being advised, here is a wonderful link that suggests ways you can keep yourself entertained. This listing includes museum tours, virtual tours, animal fun, educational resources and more!

Visit www.braininjurycanada.ca/ideas-social-distancing/

September 1 to 30, 2020

Artists of Uxbridge — Virtual Art Show

Online show and sale. Instead of the annual show at Art on the Fringe, find out how you can talk to the artists and see their artwork in person (outdoors on the porch). Visit the website for details.
Uxbridge
www.artistsofuxbridge.ca/art

September to October 29, 2020

Haunted Ghost Drive-Thru Tours

Take a guided tour of the historic village at night and hear stories from the past that still haunt people today. Learn about paranormal investigations that have found evidence of spirits and ghosts, and hear stories of past tragedies. Every Thursday until October 29. Registration is required in advance.
Pickering
www.pickering.ca
905-683-8401

October 6, 2020

TNDF's Dash & Shine

It takes just 5 minutes to walk by the Produce Stand + Prepared Dinners. Join the line, physically distance, and safely socialize as you pick up fresh, local produce and chef made meals. Don't forget to BRING YOUR MASK! All proceeds go towards The Nourish and Develop Foundation. Prepared meals are a recommended donation of \$5.00 or pay what you can (cash only).
Brock
www.tndf.ca
705-432-2444

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.

AT THE BOX OFFICE

by Stephanie Herrera



For the Whole Family

Connected comes to theatres October 23. The movie focuses on the Mitchell family, dealing with their eldest, Katie, leaving for college. Her father, Rick, decides their devices have gotten in the way of their relationships so he forces the whole family on a cross-country road trip to Katie's college in order to re-connect. Along the way they are interrupted by a robot uprising that not only binds the family together, but also shows what makes them different from everyone else makes them special enough to save the world.

Soul hits theatres November 20. Joe Gardner (Jamie Foxx), a middle-school band teacher who is questioning his purpose on this Earth, is suddenly faced with an opportunity to fulfill his dream of becoming a Jazz musician. Unfortunately, a misfortunate accident catapults him to the "other side" and he discovers what happens to souls. He meets 22 (Tina Fey) who has no interest in going to Earth because she doesn't see the point to life if there's death at the end. Joe helps 22 see the beauty of life and makes her his unwitting aid to get back to Earth.

Action & Adventure

Wonder Woman 1984 hits theatres on October 2. Gal Gadot and Chris Pine return as Diana Prince and Steve Trevor, but now find themselves in 1984. We are also introduced to two new villains, millionaire Maxwell Lord (Pedro Pascal) and Cheetah (Kirsten Wiig) all in a nostalgic background of the 80's.

Black Widow has Scarlett Johansson reprising her role as Natasha Romanoff, following the events of 2016's Captain America: Civil War, on November 6. Natasha finds herself alone and forced to confront her dark past. She realizes she should have gone back to help her sister who was trained as she was and this is her chance to shut down the facility. She is faced with a powerful foe: the Taskmaster who mimics the physical capabilities of anyone he is fighting.

Dramas & Thrillers

Death on the Nile is a remake of Agatha Christies' sequel to Murder on the Orient Express. Kenneth Branagh returns as the film's director and as Hercule Poirot. While on vacation, Detective Poirot becomes involved in a love triangle turned murderous while traveling to Egypt. The clues begin on October 9.

Fatale is a heart-stopping, dark film centering on Darren (Michael Ealy) a married man who is pulled into a police investigation led by Detective Quinlan (Hilary Swank) who he has had a one-night stand with. Darren finds himself trapped by the manipulative detective as he fights to save his marriage while he is relentlessly out-witted and compromised to the breaking point. It hits theatres October 30.

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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Soul Searching

by Tara Richardson

I'm sure I'm not alone in feeling like I haven't been the best version of myself in 2020 so far... It feels like COVID-19 was a tornado and, in its wake, left behind so many fallen trees and debris that navigating once familiar roads are now obstacles we face daily. It can be exhausting.

The good news is that we are far more resilient than we give ourselves credit for. As human beings, we are continually challenged by the universe to adapt to curveballs life throws at us. COVID-19 is a curveball that has forced most of us to become more resilient than we could have ever imagined becoming. If you find yourself not being as resilient as you would like - you're certainly not alone - please read on for some tips to pump up your resiliency muscles.

Practice acceptance

Accepting the situation does not mean that you are happy about it. The saying "it is what it is" captures the sentiments of acceptance. If you are denying reality and desperately trying to bury your head in the sand, you will not be able to move forward and take steps that would actually be helpful in your life.

Take control

I think the hardest factor involved in situations like COVID-19 is the lack of control we have. By focusing on what we do have control over, we are more likely to feel empowered rather than helpless. We may not have control over other people's decisions, but we can choose to wear masks ourselves and to physically distance. We can choose to feel certain emotions, and we can decide what actions we take. If you're currently carrying around a victim mentality (that this is the hardest situation for YOU only) then drop it like a hot potato. Do not use the victim mentality to rationalize complaining or engaging in negative behaviours.

Opportunity for self-discovery

Adversity can be a catalyst for personal growth. That is, if your mind is open to the opportunity. Don't let COVID-19 restrictions inhibit growth. Explore the world of cyberspace and take online courses or workshops to learn new skills or connect with other like-minded people.

There is hope

It's easy to get stuck in a dark tunnel of negativity when there's so much anxiety and uncertainty. Reflect on past difficult situations that you have endured and remind yourself that you can apply the skills and strengths you used then to deal with what you're going through now.

If you are struggling to stay mentally afloat during the pandemic, I encourage you to practice these tips. If you need more support, please reach out to a mental health specialist.

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.

Get Fit: Inside & Out

by Bianca Schaefer



A Lesson in Outdoor "Active" Etiquette – Be Kind When Sharing Public Space

I'm an outdoor fitness enthusiast; I love to walk, run and cycle outdoors. But one thing I've learned through COVID is that we all don't move about in the same way. That's why I think it's important to be mindful that though we may be getting outdoors to stay active, we must also acknowledge that we share the same space. Whether we're trying to get fit, stay fit or just enjoy nature this Fall, here are some tips that can help you and others navigate through some courteous "Rules of Outdoor Engagement".

Be Aware of What's Behind You

Stopping suddenly in the middle of your tracks to check your phone, take a picture, or turn around can be difficult to navigate for an approaching runner, roller-blader or cyclist. Rule of thumb is, the faster one is moving, the more time/space they need to move around you. I realize sometimes a stop is unavoidable but if possible, look behind you and or step to the side. Your fellow citizen will thank you for your courtesy.

Maintain Hearing Ability

We've all heard those horror stories of the person who walked across the street, distracted and unable to hear the car honking because they had their headphones on. But the truth is, even if you're in a park it's important to maintain a sense of hearing ability so you are aware of who or what is approaching. Whether it's another person, pet, child or wildlife, keeping an ear out for what's going on is not only a safety matter, it's smart as well.

Give a Heads Up

Let's face it, nature has a calming effect. We head outdoors to relieve stress and get away from it all. It's no wonder we're sometimes distracted and really not paying attention to other people around us. That's why it's always kind to slow down, and give a heads up to let someone know when you are approaching, especially from behind. No one likes to be startled because they didn't know you were coming. It's important to note that some people are hearing / vision impaired and may not see or hear you the first time around. Watch out for the elderly, physically disabled, families with toddlers, pets not on a leash or people looking down or away. A ring of your bell or a "Heads up/Behind ya" is a courteous gesture if done with kindness.

Don't Be Territorial and Respect the Environment

We all have our favourite outdoor spaces. And it can be hard to share that space with newbies that "never used to use that space before". But we must realize that we do not own these public places, no matter how often we use them. One of the kindest things one can do, is welcome newbies with a smile, a hello and possibly even a "good job". Let's take care of our outdoor space as we also encourage one another.

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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by Sarah Malik



Tweens, Teens & In-Between

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

Albert Einstein

Hey Readers! This has been a time of great struggle and great enlightenment. I have learned a lot about myself and the world during this pandemic. I discovered a love for painting which has helped me pass time and cope with the uncertainties of this COVID-19 era.

I know a lot of us have missed out on some important milestones and events since school went online. Congratulations, especially if you found it tough to motivate yourself through distance learning. It is hard to go about doing school work when most of us do not have the same routines as before and some of us may even have loved ones suffering from COVID-19. We missed out on certain milestones like the last day of classes, club photo day, graduations and other celebratory events. However, at the end of the day we made it - and that is a big accomplishment.

During this time, we have seen society try to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our structural safeguards have proven to be weak or majorly flawed. We are privileged in Canada to have universal health coverage so that people are not financially barred from getting tested. However, people still don't have enough paid sick days and have to choose between their health and the need to feed their families. The current *Black Lives Matter* movement has also amplified the persistent reality of police brutality against BIPOC people in Canada. Each of these so-called enlightenments (which to some are not new and have been their realities their whole lives) has shown that society cannot go back to the way things were. We need to use this pandemic as a chance to fix, restructure, and rebuild our broken systems.

Furthermore, it is always a good idea to support local businesses. Many stores have been forced to lay off employees in response to the economic downturn. Ordering takeout is one delicious way I am choosing to support small businesses. If you shop in-store, make sure to follow customer guidelines including wearing a mask to ensure the safety of staff and other customers.

Lastly, I want to remind you to take care of yourself during these trying times. A lot of people- especially youth, have been feeling anxious and hopeless during this time. It is okay if you feel this way. Remember that you are never alone and that there is always someone you can go to for help. Reach out to a friend, a parent/guardian, teacher, classmate, or an online/phone resource. Sometimes when you're entering a bad place, mentally or physically, it can feel as if time has stopped and you can no longer see the path ahead. However, one day you will look back and be so grateful that you kept going.

I wish you all a happy fall, and a strong start to the new school year!

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.

Family Matters

by Josie Myers



There's no doubt that things will feel a lot different this September as our kids return to school in the wake of COVID-19. One of the most important things you can do for your kids to help them prepare is talk to them about how things will look in the fall. Student mental health and well-being is a core consideration during school re-entry.

Voluntary Attendance

It's still uncertain how things will look in September, but we do know that school attendance will be voluntary. It's important to consider the options and decide which will work the best for your child and your family. For families not choosing to send their children to school, there will be at-home learning opportunities. Children attending school could face normal attendance with enhanced safety measures or a modified school day with smaller class size and children attending on alternative days rather than every day of the week. Whichever option you choose, it's important to explain to your child it's going to be different than before COVID-19. They may not see the same friends they're used to seeing.

Noteworthy Adaptations

Some things you might want to consider discussing with your child(ren) include the addition of visual cues in the school (like tape on the floor indicating safe distances). Children may need to minimize the number of personal belongings they bring to school, and this is something we as parents can prepare them for ahead of time.

Students still have an opportunity to have contact with other kids, at-home students will be linked to in-class students via video conferencing. Being on video and communicating with fellow students may take some getting used to. Help your child practice on your phone or your computer to help prepare them.

Things You Can Do at Home

While teachers will be reminding students to practice health safety skills such as proper handwashing and covering their sneezes with their elbows, parents can do their part by reminding their children of these healthy habits while at home as well.

Things Are Different and That's Okay

We all struggle with change, but it can be particularly difficult for children. It's important to stress that just because things are different, doesn't mean they are any worse or better. Keep a close eye on how your child is adjusting and don't be afraid to ask for help. School districts are putting extra mental health help in place to support students and parents that are struggling.

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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by Wendy Lee



A Forkful of Healthy

Roasted Root Vegetable Soup

Root vegetables are vegetables that are actually the "root" of the plant, which means that they grow underground rather than on top of the soil. Most of them do have edible leaves that grow on the top of the soil, like carrots and beets. Most of the time people usually just eat the vegetable part, but the leaves can be just as edible and delicious! You might be more familiar with carrots, sweet potatoes, and beets, but may not have experimented much with root vegetables like rutabaga, turnips, and parsnips which have a little bit of a bite to them, so roasting them brings out more of their sweeter side and makes them super delicious!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups diced parsnips, peeled
- 2 cups diced rutabagas, peeled
- 2 cups diced turnips, peeled
- 3 cups diced carrots, peeled
- 3 cups diced sweet potatoes, peeled
- 4 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- 1/2 yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-1/2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp chopped fresh rosemary



- 1 bay leaf
- 8-10 cups vegetable stock, depending on how thick you want the consistency
- salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Pre-heat oven to 450 degrees. Divide the root vegetables evenly between two large baking sheets. Drizzle each with 1-1/2 teaspoons olive oil and season each with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Place both baking sheets in the oven and roast for about 30 minutes flipping once and rotating trays halfway through.
- Heat a large pot over medium heat and add in 1 teaspoon olive oil, yellow onion, garlic, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cook for about five minutes. Add the roasted root vegetables and stir. Then, add the vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for ten minutes.
- Turn off the heat and let soup cool. Then, using an immersion blender blend the soup to desired consistency. You can also blend the soup in batches in a blender or food processor. Add the soup back to the pot and heat when ready to serve.

Protein: 2.4g	Carbs: 34g	Fat: 3.9g
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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!

FINANCE & REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

8 Personal Saving Tips to put more Money in your Pocket

Fall is finally here! With all the ups and downs this year with the challenges of COVID, it's a great time to start getting back into a routine and saving some \$\$ where you can. Always remember, that the small stuff adds up to big savings!

1. Make your morning coffee at home. If you buy a coffee daily, implementing this change can save you approximately \$100 monthly or \$1200 annually.
2. Make your lunch. If you're eating out for lunch every day, on the low end \$10/daily - by bringing your lunch you can save approximately \$200/month or \$2400 annually.
3. Use a refillable water bottle. Having a few refillable water bottles handy will save you from buying cases of bottled water and it's good for the environment. Win/Win!
4. Plan your meals weekly. By planning out what your meals will be for the week before grocery shopping, you cut down the number of times you need to run to the grocery store or are tempted to eat out.
5. Use a cashback credit card for all your purchases. There are many great cash back and points credit cards with no annual fees. If you are disciplined enough not to overspend and to pay off your monthly balances, using a rewards credit card for all your purchases can help save you 1-3% on all the money you spend.
6. Pay your insurance premiums upfront. By paying your insurance premiums in a lump sum annually, you save up to 8% on your annual insurance costs.
7. Cancel subscriptions and memberships you don't use. This is especially important if they renew automatically.
8. Learn to negotiate. As an example, you can shop around and negotiate for your insurance premium, mortgage rates, cell phone, cable and home phone packages to ensure you're getting the best rate and most appropriate package for your usage.

Once you've located the easiest areas to save, be sure to set up an automatic savings plan with your bank to move your saved money into a high interest savings account or investment so you're sure to hold on to your money, and can move on to the business of growing it!

Nicole Forrester is a local Durham & GTA Real Estate Broker with over 17+ years of experience in the financial industry. Trained on Bay Street as an Investment Executive & Professional Financial Planner for one of Canada's largest financial institutions, she has extensive experience negotiating large financial transactions. Nicole's goal is to be a blessing to every person she meets and recognizes that every trade in Real Estate is not just a house... it's a Home. For more information, search Nicole Forrester Real Estate Broker on Social Media.

by Nicole Forrester



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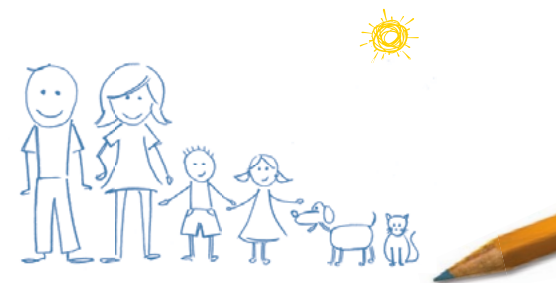
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by Sue-Ann Bavlnka

Ask Sue-Ann



Dear Sue-Ann:

Something is missing from my life. If you were observing my life, it looks normal. I wouldn't say I am unhappy but I wouldn't say I was happy either. It appears everywhere I go; everyone is expressionless lately. I am looking for suggestions to fix it.

Signed: Emotionally Lost

A. There is a very important thing missing from your life, and it is laughter. Pause for a minute and ask yourself, when was the last time you laughed so hard you could barely catch your breath? From time-to-time, I will go through a week and ask my clients that question. It is unsettling how long it has been for some people. There are more people than you realize that have gone a year or more without being full of uncontrollable laughter. It has been that long since they have seen humour in the world.

If this is you, I suggest you ask yourself why that is. What are you really choosing to focus on a daily basis? If you are focusing on sadness, regret, loss, pain, your thoughts will only reflect that. Take a real look at what you are allowing yourself to see and hear on a daily basis. Life can get out of balance. We all go through difficulties and life can be intense sometimes, but how do you pull yourself out of that. That is what I am asking you to consider. One way is to remember to look for humour, the things that inspire laughter within you. Laughter heals the body, mind and spirit. I believe it will improve and extend the quality of life. It exists all around us - do you allow yourself to see it? Remember, it is not a weakness to laugh at yourself. It gives you a relaxed perception of yourself and opens you up to truly loving yourself just the way you are - joyfully.

The affirmation I am suggesting you work with is: With each breath that I take, I see life through the eyes of humour and embrace the joy and laughter that exists around me daily. My body, mind and spirit vibrate with pure joy.

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



No more “But”, Instead “I Will”

The COVID 19 pandemic has given us a chance to reset our lives and our priorities. It has given us the opportunity to step off the treadmill and actually breathe. For many, it was very uncomfortable at first. However, as time went on, we were forced to rethink life. We had the time to look at our lives through different lenses. People started looking at their work, marriages, children, friendships, finances, and mortality more closely and with a deeper perspective.

I heard a lot less “but”, and a lot more, “I’m going to”.

There is a renewed sense of community. One of the things I observed for example, were the number of people out for walks, either as individuals, and in so many cases, something I had never seen before, entire families. People are starting to rediscover some of the simple pleasures of life. People admiring landscapes and taking the time to admire the beauty of different gardens in neighbourhoods.

One of the pleasures for me was to hop in my car along with my wife and head to different locations around the GTA, or out into the country to see places we wouldn’t normally have the time to explore, all from the comfort of our car. I was so amazed and awe inspired by the scenery. The air was so much cleaner, and the wild life was plentiful in rural areas. The atmosphere and the animals were also enjoying the time to reset and recharge.

In the middle of all this, we have seen a number of deaths too, and for the people affected, this is very sad. So, how do we honour the people who suffered loss?

No more “but”, instead “I will”.

Decide now, I won’t go back to the same old, same old. I will live my life to the max. I will set goals daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. I will do the things I have been putting off. I will not let fear get in the way. I will live with the reality that I am not ultimately in control. I will live as if everything is stable, and at the same time, with the reality that everything can change dramatically in a moment.

I will totally enjoy my life. I will have better relationships. I will treat people with greater love and respect. I will take better care of finances. I will explore life more. I will be more adventurous. I will read more. I will be more curious. I will let go of past hurt. I will forgive people. I will forgive myself. I will search out the greater meaning of life. I will realize I have only this life to live. I will not put off or hold back on being the best possible person I can be. I will see the beauty and the miracle of each and every day.

Be bold, make the changes you have been putting off.

From now on, I will...

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

I was in elementary school during the influenza pandemic (H2N2 virus) of 1957-1958. It caused many deaths worldwide, but I don't remember any big fuss being made at the time. Only the kids who were sick stayed home, the rest of us still went to school.

The H2N2 virus wasn't the first or last pandemic we've experienced. In 1918, there was the H1N1 virus; in 1968, there was the H3N2 virus; 2009 saw the H1N1pdm09 virus; and then there was SARS in 2002 which was officially labelled the first pandemic of the 21st century.

So, the COVID-19 pandemic we're experiencing now isn't unusual. What's different is that now we know what is going on instantaneously because of social media. It's good to be aware, but being overloaded with COVID information can make you anxious. We also need to be careful that we are getting our information from a credible source.

We know that social distancing and wearing masks helps reduce the risk of transmission. As did staying home, when cases were climbing rapidly. The way people travel blithely around the world though, it's easy for the virus to spread again. Some governments are doing a better job than others in prevention. Some people are taking the restrictions seriously, while others are ignoring it. Will this result in a second wave of the disease? I guess we'll find out.

So many changes have been made to all our lives since March. Are we now living in a new 'normal'? People have to line up to get into grocery stores because they are limiting customers inside. As seniors, some stores allow us in at 7am. That's great for me because I'm an early riser anyway. When we go into stores, we have to wear masks. There are bottles of hand sanitizer at the door. You can only walk in a one-way direction.

What was interesting was the shortages we encountered. There was a shortage of toilet paper because people were stockpiling it. There was a shortage of flour and baking powder as more people were baking since they were stuck at home. The pandemic got me into making bread more often. A bag of flour goes a long way. A bit of normality is returning but there are limits on how many of one item we can buy.

Money has also been challenging. Some of us seniors have a pension, some don't. Some seniors are working well past sixty-five because they need to. For some, all we get each month is OAS. If we worked and contributed to Canada Pension, we get that as well. Both come to a grand total of a bit over \$1100/month. The government, finally in July gave seniors a one-time payment of \$300. That is not very impressive.

I hope everyone is surviving these most interesting times.

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.

Fall Horoscope

SEPTEMBER 2020 to NOVEMBER 2020

by Julie Antoinette



Aries (March 21 – April 20)

A recent loss causes you to examine what truly matters. In the end, what is left in people's hearts remains and is remembered. Moving forward, think about your intentions of what you will have inscribed in the hearts of those who will hold you in memory and conduct yourself accordingly.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

You've happened across reminders of your childhood recently and have taken a journey of re-acquaintance into the past. You relive thoughts, emotions and future aspirations from that early perspective. You remember ideals and dreams that still burn within you. You must bring the clarity of your inner child to present day. A gift you gave yourself long ago is now ready to be opened.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

An unpleasant task looms over your head. You need momentum to reach the ideal timeline for completion. However, you are more comfortable thinking than acting. Recognize the discomfort you feel and decide to act regardless. Intentionality is your ignition, taking action is the key turn. The gears will be engaged and momentum will follow.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

You've accepted an obligation for someone you love dearly. A promise made is a promise kept. Consider this experience as a hidden gift. You never know what may transpire within you as you act on your promise. A long-held belief about love and suffering may be transformed out of its shadow-aspect and into its light-aspect.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

You seem to have hurt someone very special recently without knowing how. They've been repeating a message to you that you don't understand. You want harmony to return. This time Leo, its not about you. For whatever reason, life is asking you to be a trigger and a mirror for your special person. The reflection you provide is for them to examine, learn and grow.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Feelings of future scarcity and lack threaten to lure you away from mental peace. It's understandable that you always wish to feel prepared. Could your anxiety over lack be the underlying unconscious drive that runs your life? Are you happy with that? What you feed is what will grow. You may choose to switch out anxiety of future lack for enjoyment of your present abundance – and watch that abundance perpetuate. Those who know what enough is will always have enough.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Discipline is zeroing in on you. With Venus as your ruler, you gravitate toward comfort, delights and pleasantries. Activities of discipline and rigor charge negative emotions within you. You must change this. Allow yourself to be seduced into a romance with discipline. Search for the gratifications and satisfactions you may find within it. It is time to build this character within yourself. Discipline wants a relationship with you under new terms.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Its time to really get a grip on your control issues. This will require bravery and courage as you will be asked to dive deep into your inner ocean of chaos. Trust the universal law that transforms order out of chaos. Recognize that chaos is simply the old order falling into decay so that the new can be birthed. You of all signs must master this process as Scorpio rules transformation, death and rebirth. Relax. Nothing is under control.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

Be careful not to entangle yourself energetically in a situational web. The adhesions that keep you stuck in this web will be directly related to your participation in gossip or secretive discussions. Strong emotions will be elicited and will beg your participation. Don't fall for it. Remain emotionally reticent and transparent in your interactions and you will walk away with your freedom and integrity intact.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Someone finds themselves in dire need of a quality listener. They struggle with an issue and need to confide. They do not need advice per se, as the correct path will be happened upon through their sharing. They just need a good soundboard and someone to hold up a mirror.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

You have always been a super-social person. But recently, your social circle is undergoing a transformation. Sometimes in life, we fall out of contact with people and situations that no longer serve our growth. It's okay to be sad but take comfort in the cliché that promises, "As one door closes, another door opens."

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

In your contemplative moments, you ponder cosmic-level ideas and are impressed with the greatness of existence outside yourself. You may consider yourself in this equation in one of two ways: That you are too small and insignificant to ever have an impact on the whole. Or, that you are an integral component of everything in existence. Like a puzzle with one piece missing, it would be incomplete without you. Embrace your place in space.

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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