

# Joyful *Living*

Spring 2019



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Page 16

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# Joyful Living

Spring 2019

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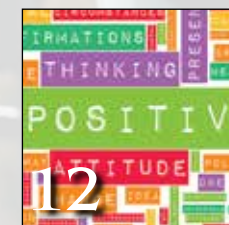
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*Joyful Living Magazine* is committed to embracing a lifestyle of joy and abundance. We are a platform for beauty, goodness and grace. We value inspired thinking and embrace changing seasons. We honor your legacy and where you are from. Our desire is to serve and respect our community.

Our intention is to bring valuable resources as diverse as our natural surroundings. We devote this magazine to you and bless your journey today, tomorrow and always. Grateful is our foundation. Love is where we live. We are Joy. We are Full. We are Living.

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# The *Healing Power* of Sleep

Grandmawithmuscles.com –  
Also the author of  
*Healthy & Free* &  
40 days to Wholeness  
(A Healthy & Free Devotional)



BY BENI JOHNSON

There are seven pillars of health I talk about in my book *Healthy & Free*. The one I want to share with you today is the power of sleep and rest.

When I was a little girl, my mom worked full time. So, after school, we would go over to grandma’s house. I was five years old so, when I got home from school, I would have to lay down and take a nap. Like most children, I thought this was a complete waste of time. I would fall asleep so quickly that I didn’t really understand where the time went. I remember my grandma tucking me in as I lay down to sleep. I looked up at her and said, “Grandma, as soon as I go to sleep, it’s like I wake up. It goes so fast.”

She said, “Yes, that happens when you are little but it won’t always be like that.” As a child, falling asleep was the easiest thing in the world. I didn’t know that it could become more difficult as I aged but, boy, was she right!

I think most people have times when they wrestle with sleeping well. I know that there are some that even dread going to bed because they know that night after night they will be faced with the same struggle.

My hope is that this article would offer some help for those who are longing for a good night’s sleep.

Do you know that adults need at least 7 ½ hours of sleep per night and that the best time to sleep is between 10PM and 6AM? Let’s look at why.

If you consistently alternate your bedtimes—going to bed at 11PM on one day, 8PM the next, and 3AM at other times—you keep your body guessing about when it is supposed to relax. Our bodies have a natural, circadian rhythm—like an internal clock that signals our sleep-awake cycle. To maintain this cycle, we

need to stick to regular sleeping time as much as possible.

We all know that when you get a good night’s sleep you look and feel better, not to mention that your next day is more productive. Here’s what happens when you sleep: your blood pressure drops, allowing your heart to take a break. Your body begins to release hormones that slow your breathing and relax other muscles in the body. This process can reduce inflammation and assist with your body’s natural healing process. This is a beautiful thing. Our Creator made sleep for us so our bodies can restore and heal.

On an average night, we cycle through four phases of sleep. To complete these cycles, it’s important that we maintain 7 ½ to 8 hours of sleep time. During these cycles, our brain is very affected. There are pronounced changes in the electrical activity of the brain during sleep. The brain has trillions of nerve cells and, during a good night’s sleep, they literally rewire themselves. Dr. Bazil, the Director of the Division of Epilepsy and Sleep at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, wrote that, “Your brain is making a map of the information...making new connections and breaking other ones.” Our brains process new information while we sleep. This is fascinating.

Right before I wrote this article, I came down with a sinus cold. I believe it was due to stress and the atmospheric changes in the weather. I was three days into feeling sick, so I decided to just take the day and rest. I woke up that morning and, after I ate breakfast, I lay on the couch and slept pretty much most of the morning. That night, I went to bed early and slept for another ten hours. I don’t remember the last time I slept ten hours. But, an amazing thing happened. I woke up well! While I took the time to sleep, my body kicked into healing mode and kicked that cold out.

What can we do to help us get a good night’s sleep? Here are a few tips: while it’s sunny in the mornings, go outside first. Sitting in the sun for ten to twenty minutes will do wonders for you. This will cause the natural hormone, melatonin, to kick in and will actually help you sleep that night. If there is no sun, take a good source of melatonin, instead, such as Dream put out by Uncorkedwellness.com. I use this and it works very well for me. Then there is magnesium. Many of us are deficient in magnesium. I would suggest that, right before bedtime, take up to 300 mg of this supplement. It will relax you enough to put you to sleep. I’ve personally learned that taking a small amount of protein around 8PM before bedtime can really help you have a good night’s sleep. Now, some will advise you against eating this close to bedtime, but I have found that it works great for me.

If you are a person who has glucose issues and you find yourself consistently waking up around 3AM, take a small handful of blueberries. Blueberries help to regulate glucose levels, and they will help put you back to sleep.

If you are like me, it can be difficult to turn my brain off from thinking about the day or the things I have to get done. These tips have helped me to relax my brain. One final tip that has worked for me, although I know many experts don’t recommend it, is T.V. I’ll watch a silly show, like Andy Griffith, just to relax and, before you know it, I’m sleeping.

There are many more benefits to sleeping. I cover this topic, and many more, in my book, *Healthy & Free*. So, let’s get to sleeping for our health. **JL**

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cleverism.com/the-science-of-sleep-brief-guide-on-how-to-sleep-better/>

<sup>1</sup><https://www.nbcnews.com/better/health/what-happens-your-body-brain-while-you-sleep>

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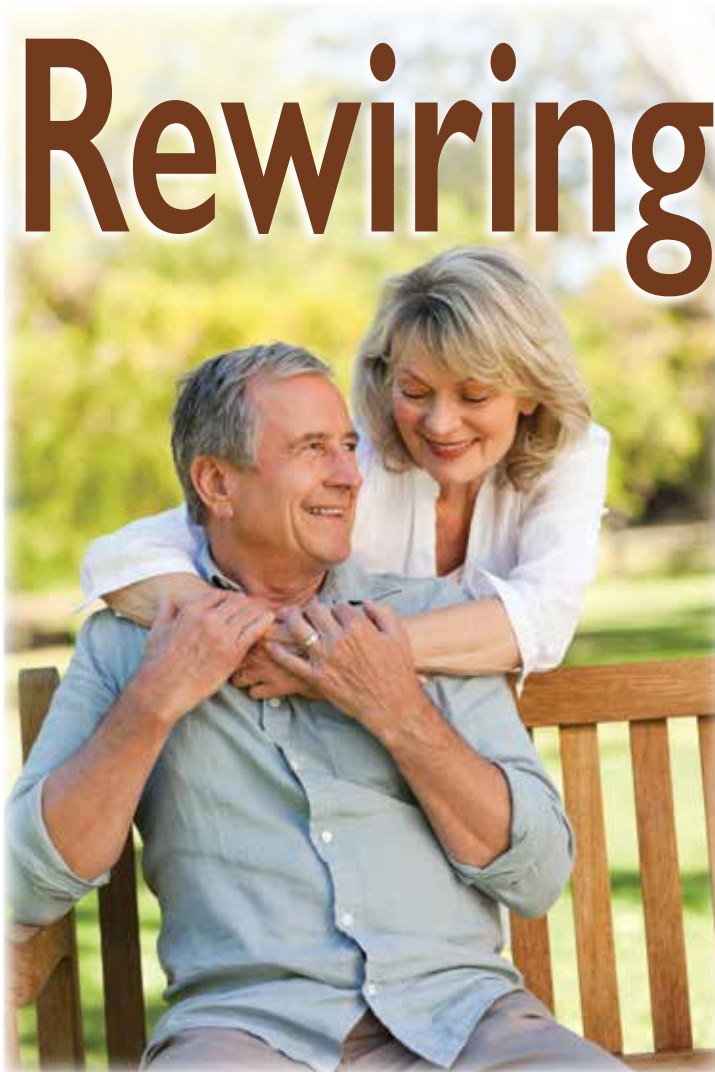
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BY MARIE WARNER

Marie has been a Registered Dietitian for 30 years. She enjoys writing and finding creative ways to manage resources. She and her husband, Kurt own Building Endeavors, Inc, a construction company that restores homes and dreams.

We counted down the days, three hundred sixty-five days to be exact to his retirement date. My husband, Kurt worked thirty-eight years in construction, had birthed five construction companies in three different states and was able to reach a point where we could launch a new vision together. He was ready to tap in to the creativity that rested within him and had the good fortune of being able to do so while he was in his fifties.

# Rewiring

If I have learned one thing from my dear husband, it is the importance of having fun at what we do. Kurt's philosophy is "If it's not fun, keep trying until you find something that is." It has created such a wonderful shift in my life, away from the grind that often comes with responsibility and a performance mindset and connects me back to what I was meant to learn in childhood ... the art of play.

I had not really looked at the meaning of the word retirement even though it is a common carrot that dangles in front of many that work for decades, teasing retirement will bring some sort of utopia. I was startled to see the word retire mean "ceasing from activity". That was a little disturbing, because what I hoped it meant was to transition to doing more of what we love with fresh passion. Maybe a better term would be "Rewiring". It seems only fitting especially after one spends decades developing a skill set, an art form and gathering the wisdom accrued from mistakes made along the way. It would be an incredible waste to cease activity as the act of retiring suggests. Upon reaching the Rewiring stage, we are blessed with the choice to plug in where we want and how we want and stay as engaged as we choose to be with random days of fishing and sleeping in until 8 am.

Here in Redding many are in a new season of change and complete transition after the fires swept through our communities. In transition, I liken it to a painter sitting down to a blank canvas. One aspect is that anything is possible: colors, shapes and ideas. Looking at this new canvas of life, there is an honor due its blank appearance. It doesn't have to be rushed in to. There is a level of quiet to walk through as the possibilities are considered. The quiet can be uncomfortable, considering our usual lifestyle of busyness and packed schedules. That perpetual motion from work and responsibility can knock the play and creativity right out of a person. We can choose to practice still and quiet and wait for the creative waves to flow. We get to sit in front of the canvas and wait until the 'ah ha' moment rises from within our creative wells as we begin anew.

For us, our blank canvas includes a collection of older homes in downtown Redding that need new life. It really is a joy to bring structures back to life. Restoring, rebuilding and redeeming a neighborhood is more than fun. It is meaningful and brings hope to those inhabiting it as well as passerby's who may be able recall the former days of a quaint and lively community. Restoring hope of new life can be very rewarding, especially when we do it together. So as our community rebuilds, may we find the fun in what we are creating and discover life at new levels as we give the quiet time to work in our hearts. JL



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written in Redding, CA © 2018 by Marie Warner



# What's Your Story

## Tell Me Your Story

I remember like it was yesterday. The day a new chapter in my life was written. The day I approached my dream tall dark and handsome and asked, *Tell me your story*. A very puzzled Guy Martin answered, "My story?"

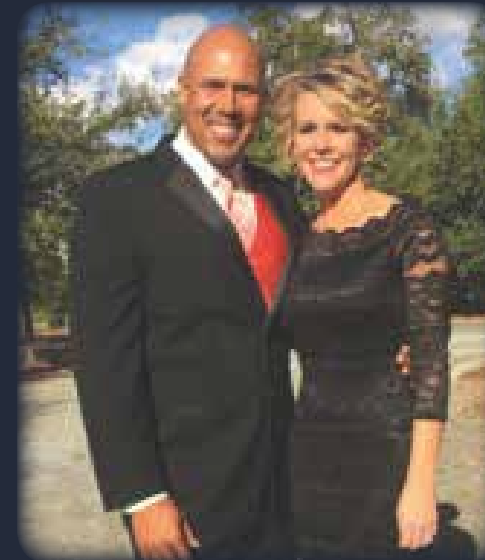


BY LONNIE JULIUS MARTIN

"Yeah, everyone's got one and I want to know yours." I replied with a flirty gleam in my eye. Here we sit, three years later writing our story together. Amazing. There is something about a story isn't there? A story is an invitation. An invitation to share and be heard and understood and it is quite reciprocal in nature. Listening to the experience of another invites us in to unwrap the mystery of worldviews, belief systems and human behavior. Stories bring perspective. It is almost effortless to form opinions and assumptions about who people are and why they do what they do, but can we every really know if we never really ask.

My husband has a huge burden for hurting people and through Gods goodness helps them find a future and hope out of some of the toughest stories! Some have blown the stereotype and challenged our perspective. I invite you into a story of two homeless men with bright new futures!

The camps, the crime, the poverty in Redding have become overwhelming. I don't know every story and I know they vary, but allow me to introduce you to two diamonds in the rough. While at Turtle Bay a few months back my husband recognized a homeless man he had seen hanging around before. He stunk like weed and was trying to find shelter from the rain in a nook near the coffee bar. Defensive and ready to be run off, you can imagine his shock when instead, he was asked his story. What happened next was unexpected. This 22-year-old young man was in a heap of tears and completely undone. Cody's story began when his parents were shot and murdered in front of him in East Oakland when he was a toddler. He bounced from dysfunctional house to drug house and by age nine was alone on the streets selling drugs to stay alive. At 14 Cody served 48 months for various "activities". It was a ping pong game of group homes



and jail after that. Cody said he never felt love from anyone other than a cashier that bought him groceries he was trying to steal as a little boy. The heartbreaking details go on. Guy felt this was a divine appointment to help Cody start a new chapter. Cody graciously accepted the offer. Fast forward several months, Cody is employed, off the streets, paying rent in an apartment and tests clean every time he is randomly drug tested. Guy is spending time teaching Cody to weld and landscape and build his skills. Together we are teaching him the value of love and family. Cody is not perfect. He is raw and he is real. He is also very appreciative and has set his feet in the right direction. We are so proud of the rare receptiveness and the "redemption" chapter in Cody's story.

Robert. Guy found Robert under a park bench shaking and unable to stand because of his alcoholism. It turns out Robert started drinking at 8 years old with his dad. Despite his rough childhood and early addiction, Robert went to college and became a manufacturing technician. He excelled at his career . . . and his drinking. Robert moved to Redding in 2000 and after many hard years found himself homeless in a local Redding park. Like Cody, Guy asked Robert his story, offered help to connect him with a program, a place to live and a leg up. Robert is now off the streets!! He attends meetings regularly, passes each random sobriety test, checks in with Guy daily, holds down two jobs and went home to see his family for Thanksgiving with no relapsing! To God be the glory.

Some stories are sweet, some are searing but no story is done until the final chapter is written. For myself, Guy, Cody, Robert and millions more, new chapters are written every day. "Just remember- when you think all is lost, the future remains" Bob Goddard JL

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BY DEBORAH KOEPPEN

Deborah Koeppen has a heart for women caught in damaging relationships, and is passionate about encouraging and supporting others through the process of learning boundaries and self-worth. Recently retired from Shasta County Social Services, she now enjoys hiking, kayaking, fishing and exploring with her husband, as well as writing, home projects, and spending time with family. She has two grown children and nine grandchildren. [debzzone@sbcglobal.net](mailto:debzzone@sbcglobal.net)

# Changing Seasons

As I've gotten older, I've become aware of how quickly things change. We relish the moments when our kids are small and our purpose is to empower and protect them. We're so enthralled by each new phase of their lives that we don't notice things gradually change.



Eventually our kids grow up, grandchildren are born, and our family moments change. As time goes on the family gatherings take on a new twist. It's subtle at first. In the back of our minds we think it will be the same forever. But one day you realize your first grandchild has moved out on their own. The trips to McDonalds for ice cream, the camping trips, and sleep-overs that we cherished slowly give way to more grown up interactions, such as school issues, first dates, career plans and marriage.

It's tempting to feel a sense of loss, as if their pending adulthood has taken away those tender moments we had with them as children. But if we are willing to change with the seasons, we can find blessings in the next chapter of life. Excitement is felt as we look at plans through our grown children's eyes. We have the opportunity to impact our grandchildren with our own experience and wisdom. Those interactions can be a time of sowing into their lives, of imparting what we've learned and watching them take hold of their future and their faith. Even during short times spent with them, they are impacted more than we realize. Another season of change can be felt on a personal level as the aging

Excitement is felt as we look at plans through our grown children's eyes.

process starts to become evident. A little extra effort is required to keep healthy and strong. Those career plans that once fueled our dreams are now replaced with the reality of retirement. But again, this can be an exciting time! Never has freedom been so abundant in our lives as at this stage, if we are willing to embrace the season.

That's the key: embrace where you are. Glean all that's available to you in your current season. Use your new-found freedom to join the gym, take up hiking, learn a new skill, and delve deeper into life. Cultivate love and honor in your family as you use your more abundant free time to sow into your kids, grandkids, and friends. Gather community around you and hold them dear. Every season has new opportunities. Look forward to the next one and the prospects it holds.

Learn to be thankful for each new phase of our families' life, each new accomplishment and new direction. Keep an attitude of gratitude and stay involved. Keep connected by phone and involved in family plans. It's life-giving to us as we age, and the wisdom and support you can contribute is more valuable than you know. *JL*

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"This is great news," said Redding City Councilwoman Kristen Schreder, who announced the flight in September as the Mayor of Redding. "United Airlines' decision to introduce a new, non-stop flight will open more opportunities for leisure and business travel, which is something the local community has told us they wanted as a first priority for expanding service."

The new flights to Los Angeles will run seven days a week, giving you a chance to visit the 'stars' or surf, or connect to other destinations worldwide. The approximate two-hour flight leaves LAX daily at 7:10 p.m. and departs Redding the following morning at 6:45 a.m., opening the door for business and leisure travel to use Redding as a launching point for a quick and easy getaway.

"City staff has made a tremendous effort to bring more non-stop flights to Redding," said Barry Tippin, Redding's City Manager. "The additional non-stop flight will stimulate travel, tourism and our regional economy."

So, whether you want to be an LA jet-setter or if you're looking for a change of scenery less than two hours away, your vacation options just got a boost.

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Admission: \$7.50  
See [RosesAndRustVintageMarket.com](http://RosesAndRustVintageMarket.com) for more information.  
Shasta District Fair and Event Center, 1890 Briggs St, Anderson, CA 96007

**Castle Craggs 50k/35k/10k**  
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See [ShastaTrailsRun.com](http://ShastaTrailsRun.com) for more information.  
Castle Craggs State Park, 20022 Castle Creek Rd, Castella, CA 96017

**Kool April Nites**  
*April 20 - 28*  
One of Reddings most anticipated annual events is fast approaching! Kool April Nites will fill Redding with colossal events. The week kicks off with Show and Shines throughout the city, and leads up to Fridays Cruise Nite and shows on Saturday and Sunday. See [KoolAprilNites.com](http://KoolAprilNites.com) for more information.  
Redding, CA 96001

**7th Annual Shasta Mud Run**  
*May 11*  
The 7th Annual Shasta Mud Run at the McConnell Foundation's Ross Ranch offers an extra muddy 5K challenge course for all ages and skill levels.  
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See [ShastaMudRun.com](http://ShastaMudRun.com) for more information.

**Redding Rodeo**  
*May 16 - 18*  
Redding's Million Dollar Tour PRCA sanctioned rodeo, with bull riding, bareback riding, barrel racing, tie-down roping, team roping, saddle bronc riding, steer wrestling, mutton bustin, chuck wagon races and other specialty acts.  
Admission: \$21  
See [ReddingRodeo.com](http://ReddingRodeo.com) for more information.  
Redding Rodeo Grounds, 715 Auditorium Dr, Redding, CA 96001

For more events, go to [VisitRedding.com/Event-Calendar](http://VisitRedding.com/Event-Calendar)

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BY DR. BOB BOYLE

Dr. Bob Boyle has been practicing as a licensed psychologist in Redding, CA since 1991. Currently, he is the staff psychologist at Far Northern Regional Center and maintains a part-time private practice. He also works with businesses and athletic teams around leadership and team-building. Dr. Boyle is co-author of *A Hitchhiker's Road Map to Leadership*. Dr. Boyle is married with four grown children, and enjoys coaching basketball and playing golf. Dr. Boyle can be reached at: [drbobbyle@gmail.com](mailto:drbobbyle@gmail.com)

## Get Quiet and Look Inside PART 2 –

Last issue, I wrote about the necessity of “getting quiet” and effectively dealing with the external noise in our lives. I offered three solutions: 1) Ignoring your phone, 2) Turning off your TV, and 3) Praying. In this issue, we will take a look at the second part, “looking inside”.

Once we get quiet, how do we “look inside”, and have some focus on our internal life? Two spiritual strategies come to mind: 1) Practicing the presence of God, and 2) The Jesus Prayer.

Brother Lawrence was a lay brother in a Carmelite monastery in France back in the 1600's. He wrote a little gem of a book, entitled “The Practice of the Presence of God”.

Brother Lawrence was a cook at the monastery. He believed that the time he spent in communion with God should be the same – whether he was hustling around in the kitchen during his work hours or on his knees in prayer during devotional time. He learned to cultivate the deep presence of God in his heart no matter WHAT he was doing. There was no artificial divide for Brother Lawrence between sacred activities (e.g. church attendance, prayer, singing worship songs) and secular activities (e.g. work activities, chores at home, brushing his teeth). In everything he did, there was the possibility of realizing he was in the presence of God. Here are two practical tips that can help us “practice the presence of God” more effectively. First, pay attention to how you begin your day. We wake up (after hitting the snooze button one too many times) and head for the kitchen to pour our first cup of coffee. Then, we quickly slide into our morning tasks: reading e-mail, perusing the newspaper or online news stories, and shower and get ready for another work day. The first tip is to begin the day by setting the stage with some spiritual intentionality. Before beginning all of our morning tasks – acknowledge God. Pray. Thank Him for the day. Just be in His presence for a moment. Just a moment, or even longer if you are able. Practice His presence to start your day!

The second spiritual strategy for “looking inside” is the Jesus Prayer. Some of you may have heard of this prayer and others may not. I would venture to say that all of us would like to pray more. This may even have been one of your New Year's resolutions. In Scripture, Paul urged Christians to “pray without ceasing”. This seems like a tall task. But as Father Richard Rohr has said, we can't walk around saying he Our Father all day! The Jesus Prayer is very simple. It is prayed in accordance with our breathing. When taking a deep breath in (through your nose), pray the words “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God”. While exhaling, long and slowly through your mouth – pray the words “Have mercy on me, a sinner”. Pray this prayer repetitively. Five times. Ten times. Or fifty times. Praying the Jesus Prayer reorients us toward the Divine. Henri Nouwen said that this prayer can “make the soul more sweet and serene”. Saying this prayer can keep help us acknowledge the presence of God. “Looking inside” will pay dividends as we acknowledge God's continual and persevering presence in our lives. JL



BY SUSAN RHYNE

The world seemed suddenly silent. The news screamed for us, but everywhere we went it was hushed. Traffic was minimal, stores and drive-throughs were closed. We were shell-shocked and suddenly aware of our vulnerability. Our community sprang to action with the evacuation centers and help stations. We gave food, blankets, hugs and Kleenex. Behind our gas-masks we were hidden, but suddenly aware of the power of emotion behind someone's eyes.

I wasn't going to write anything about the recent fires which rose like the Boogie Man out of the sky this past summer. Something occurred to me then, and I was just recently reminded of it. That is, we all talked in hushed voices for a few weeks like people do in a hospital, or when saying the word cancer. We asked strangers earnestly, but quietly, if they were ok, their homes and families safe.

We spoke to each other kindly and compassionately. Strangers looked each other in the eye. The phrase “How are you today?” took on meaning and intention. A clerk in a store asked if I was purchasing towels as a gift. “Yes,” I said. “My daughter and her husband lost everything in the fire, and just recently found a home.” Instantly, her voice lowered. She looked me in the eye saying softly, “I'm so sorry. I hope they're ok.”

When life gets out of control, like it did with the fire, we connect with each other on a whole different level than “normal” life. The routine questions and answers become sincere. We become linked by circumstances and have sympathy for another's loss. Stories poured out of people for weeks, months. Survivors were both grateful and guilty. Those who lost all were bewildered but buoyed

by the kindness of strangers and the outpouring of support.

This past weekend, I was privileged to see the support continue by the ladies of St. James Lutheran Church. These angels made quilts for Carr Fire victims, and they were glorious. A riot of color, intricacy of design, and textures beyond measure were on display. My daughter received two beautiful quilts and one free dog bed that was soft and colorful. I looked at these women and was struck by many of the same gestures and words we heard right after the fire. They looked in our eyes, sympathized with our loss, and spoke softly words of encouragement and hope.

It is my hope that we remember that level of compassion and care. I know that life for most people has gone back to “normal”. Many of the Carr Fire survivors were re-traumatized by the Camp Fire including victims, first responders, and those of us who love these people. May we intentionally look each other in the eye and say softly and sincerely, “How are you”. Really, we all need it. JL

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Christy Largent is a motivational speaker with a focus on positivity and engagement. She helps organizations use her positivity principles to increase employee engagement. She lives in Flower Mound, Texas with her 2 school-aged kiddos and a very patient husband.

BY CHRISTY LARGENT

Follow her on all social media @christylargent and subscribe to her Instagram channel for daily encouragement helping you find the bright side of life. [www.christylargent.com](http://www.christylargent.com)

# It's Your Time for a MINDSET RESET

This is the time of year we decide to make a change. We've had it, and we're ready for something different. The time has come to **TAKE ACTION!** I know this feeling very well.

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I've bought the courses, signed up for the webinars, read the books, taken the classes, had coaching with the gurus, planned out the strategy, bought more courses, set more goals, dreamed bigger dreams, studied more.

And then...it was March, April, May, and with the greatest of intentions I was still exactly where I was January 1st, only now I was bloated down with information.

You know the feeling. The after Thanksgiving dinner feeling. The waddle to the sofa, lay down, and pray nobody suggests an after dinner walk feeling. Ugh!

This morning, trying to get a handle on why I felt so stuck, it dawned on me I had become a type of "Dead Sea."

The Dead Sea in Israel is "dead" because it's below sea level and it only receives water - there is no egress. The lake is always getting fed, but it's never feeding others.

Thick water, rich with minerals, but basically as good as dead.

Exactly.

So as we sit here in February, I think it's time for a Mindset Reset. It's time to stop only taking in and start putting out.

Heavy laden with ideas, knowledge

and information, here are a few ideas I believe will get you going in the direction of your heart's desire.

**Idea #1 - Recognize our gifts and talents need to be used in service to others.**

No matter your opinion on cooking, I'll bet you can agree that when you are cooking for friends to come over, or for a special birthday dinner, it changes the thoughts in your mind. Even if you hate cooking, (like I do!), you can adjust your mindset so it's more enjoyable because of who you are doing it for.

In that same way, when we refocus our work to reflect a focus on serving others rather than just for our own satisfaction, it makes even unpleasant tasks sweeter and more meaningful. And when your work is more meaningful, you are more inclined to hit your goals and give more to the world.

**Idea #2 - Don't minimize your contribution.**

How many times have you thought to speak up and offer your help with something, only to stop yourself by telling yourself that anyone could do it, that it isn't that special, or that it's not good enough to put out there.

Stop it! Only you can offer what you can offer. You bring a unique element

that **ONLY YOU CAN DO**. Remind yourself of this daily. Nothing is too small or too insignificant. You bring your unique self. And that is more than enough.

**Idea #3 - Be proactive in seeking out ways to give back.**

After any trauma to a community, in the immediate aftermath, there is usually a gigantic outpouring of help. Then, as the months go by, the drama lessens, the attention lessons, and the support can dwindle.

So there is usually a void ready to be filled somewhere in your community. Here in Northern California, the devastation of the fires is still a daily experience. That means there are many, many ways you can give back to the community.

Consider where your passions lie, then seek out opportunity to volunteer in that area. Even Bill and Melinda Gates, some of the richest people in the world, would tell you their most rewarding work is from the work of their Foundation - giving back to those who are in need.

So as we head into 2019, I encourage you to be bold in service and confident in your contributions. The *world* is waiting to be blessed. JL

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# Food Addiction Leads to Weight Gain and Poor Health



BY SUSAN U. NEAL  
RN, MBA, MHS

Susan U. Neal RN, MBA, MHS is on a mission to improve the health of the body of Christ. She is the author of five books including *7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates*. For additional healthy living resources go to [SusanUNeal.com](http://SusanUNeal.com). Her award winning book *Christian Study Guide to Get off Sugar and Carbohydrates* (On Amazon) is helping Christians reclaim their health.

America is in the midst of a health crisis because over half of Americans live with a chronic illness and forty percent suffer from obesity. This epidemic is primarily due to the overconsumption of sugar and processed foods. Unfortunately, these substances are addictive and harmful, contributing to chronic ailments such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Sugar causes the release of dopamine in the brain, which is part of our bodies' feel-good reward system. Dopamine, a feel-good neurohormone, releases when we eat foods high in sugar, take opiate drugs, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, pet an animal, or hug a child. Since we enjoy the euphoric feelings of the dopamine we want more of whatever causes its release. In fact, when a food addict sees sugary foods, dopamine releases and causes the person to desire this food.

At some point, an overconsumption of sugar and processed foods rewire the brain's neural pathways and cause a person to become addicted. This triggers binge eating despite its consequences of weight gain and health problems. Therefore, getting off sugar is more complicated than it may seem. It is no longer about willpower but a *biochemical addiction*.

Two hallmarks of addiction include persistent desire and repeated unsuccessful attempts to stop. Being addicted to food is like having a monster inside of you who takes control of your body and eats a bunch of unhealthy food. You can't stop the cravings or binges no matter what you try. Understanding that food addiction is not a lack of self-control, but a rewiring of the brain, helps you to be more compassionate with yourself.

If you have not considered the possibility of having a food addiction, do not feel shame over the terminology. Your body may have fallen prey to the effects of sugar and wheat that are ingrained in our society's food habits. The surgeon general's 2016 report indicated that addiction is a chronic brain disease, not a moral failing.

Many of the health problems we suffer are connected to eating habits. Change your life by changing the types of food you eat. Learn which foods are beneficial and which foods make you sick. Don't struggle on your own to make necessary lifestyle changes. Learn how to mobilize God's power. Through the Holy Spirit, you become strong and able to accomplish what you cannot achieve by your own efforts. When you apply God's wisdom, along with accurate knowledge about today's food, you will improve your health and weight and defeat the enemy.

This study guide provides a group experience to help

Two hallmarks of addiction include persistent desire and repeated unsuccessful attempts to stop.

implement the plans in *7 Steps to Get off Sugar and Carbohydrates*. Accountability and encouragement improve your chance for success as you learn to become a healthy steward of the resources you've been given. You only have one body, and you want it to carry you through this life gracefully. Reclaim the abundant life God wants you to live. Take this journey to recover your health and achieve all the blessings the Lord has in store for you.

If you are addicted, you can't rely on moderation. Deceptive foods tempt us wherever we turn, and we do not have the willpower to stop eating, so we binge. More than half of Americans suffer with a chronic disease and 40 percent are obese. We are shortening our lifespan through our unhealthy food patterns. Struggling with health problems is not our true destiny.

Fifty years ago food addiction was unheard of, but today with the way the food industry entices us with sugar, wheat, and artificial flavors it is common. We are more than physical beings; we are spiritual as well, and we

can untangle the brain's rewiring to reset it back to normal. In the next article, we will discuss a five-step freedom from addiction plan.

If you are a food addict, I recommend you join a weight-loss program or a twelve-step food addiction program along with a corresponding support group. *Christian Study Guide for 7 Steps to Get off Sugar and Carbohydrates* was written to help people overcome food addiction. **JL**

Excerpt with permission from *Christian Study Guide to 7 Steps to Get off Sugar and Carbohydrates* by Susan U. Neal, copyright 2018.

### Keywords

1. food addiction, addiction, chronic illness, health, refined carbohydrates, eat clean
2. Susan U. Neal

### Related Topics

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# Learning Moments

## Handling School Conflict

Dear Dr. W.,

**My child is complaining about one of her teachers. What's the best way to approach this?**

This is a very practical....and tricky....question. It somewhat depends on the type of complaint. Is it too much homework, the perception that the teacher is picking on her, the expectations, the personality style of the teacher.....or something that is harming a child?

I jokingly tell parents at Back to School night, "If you'll believe only half of what you hear about me, I'll believe only half of what I hear about you." In other words, when we hear things second-hand, the facts may be exaggerated. "Mrs. Smith is always yelling at us," when in reality it happened one day when music was blaring and the teacher had to raise her voice to be heard. So....how do we find out if what we're hearing has merit?

Of course, as parents, our first instinct is to protect and defend our child. But before you rush in, you need to have a plan. Please don't compare notes with other parents to see what they hear. That may turn into a gossip fest and you still won't know what happened, plus it is not a healthy model for your child. Should you talk to the principal? As a teacher, I want parents to come to me first to give me opportunity to address the concern. The majority of teachers want honest, open relationships with parents and welcome questions and concerns.

### Here's the plan:

1. Talk to your daughter and ask questions to get more specific information. Exactly how is the class structured, are students listening, what is happening that she doesn't agree with, etc.? Challenge her to remain respectful and honoring in class.
2. Schedule a meeting with the teacher and plan to use the "sandwich" method of communication by telling the teacher something good, what you're concerned about, and end with something good. If the child is in middle school or above, depending on the concern, s/he could also attend the meeting.

My script would go something like this. "Mrs. Smith, I really appreciate all you're doing for Mary (your child). (Be specific, as in 'I really appreciated the creative way students did the report.')

I believe teachers and parents should work as a team, and that's why I feel it's important for me to share what I'm hearing. Mary didn't understand something that happened in class. She feels ..... and this is where you would state the problem as Mary sees it.

3. Be a listener. Give grace and try not to be defensive. Make the conversation about understanding the situation and wanting to work together. Use the word "misunderstanding" rather than a more combative term.

4. Usually you'll be able to work through the situation with the teacher and create a plan or strategy to prevent misunderstandings in the future.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may have to go to the principal with your concerns. The exception to this plan would be if it's obvious that the teacher is abusing her power and causing harm to students, which would be a direct visit with the principal.

Although you may dread meeting with a teacher, this can be an important learning experience for both you and your child and an opportunity to emphasize how important attitude and seeing another perspective can be. It's also helpful for a teacher to see something from the viewpoint of a student and see how it might be interpreted differently than intended. JL



BY CAROL WERTZ

Associate Professor at Simpson University with over 35 years in education and experience in teaching pre-K through adult, Carol has developed a wealth of experience and is ready for a new challenge in answering your educational questions. Please contact her at [carolbwertz@gmail.com](mailto:carolbwertz@gmail.com)

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# From the *Dungeon of Self* to the *Liberty of Love*



BY SHARON FRAZIER

It was the first day of my senior year in high school, and I was once again the new girl in class. I timidly approached the bus stop, maneuvering around kids gathered in impenetrable huddles. I dreaded standing alone. I prayed, *Dear Lord, please let someone invite me into their group.* I could hear the relaxed chatter of friends who knew each other well and had no trouble thinking of something to talk about. I agonized, “*why can’t I just not care what others think of me? Why can’t I be outgoing and carefree?*” I rummaged in my purse, pretending to be looking for something. With relief, I saw the school bus approaching, but that was replaced by a new fear – who would I sit by and share the awkward, silent ride to school?

I was never comfortable meeting new people. My dad, a career Air Force man, had been transferred that summer, so I had to start over in a new school. I hoped I could make a new start where nobody knew me and my shyness. But that day I was unable to venture toward the tight clusters of teens who seemed oblivious to my presence. I did make friends that year through the natural process of shared classes and activities. But my fear of rejection paralyzed my desire to be the one who initiates connection with other people.

I remember another time early in my marriage, when in the evenings I would peek out my second story apartment window, as if to hasten my husband’s return from his part-time job. On the front steps below me sat several young women engaged in the smiling banter of close friends. I would quickly close the blinds, hoping the women wouldn’t notice me and think me strange. I endured my self-imposed exile, reckoning that if they wanted me to join them, they would invite me. When I met the other women coming or going from the apartment, we would smile and say hello. But it wasn’t until my husband got to know the men and we attended some couples’ get-togethers that I formed some relationships with my neighbors. When I had known my new friends a little while, one of them said, “We used to see you looking out the window and wondered why you never came down.” I admitted that their circle looked complete and I never considered that I could join them without being asked.

These painful stories illustrate my crippling self-consciousness and serve as the backdrop to what I’ve learned and am learning about the “dungeon of self.” I came across that phrase in an excerpt of George MacDonald’s essay, *Love Thy Neighbor*: “Love of one’s neighbor is the only door out of the dungeon of self.” I was instantly pierced by that word picture that defined my continual struggle to be free from self-absorption, self-consciousness, self-preoccupation. I longed to be able to forget about myself and be more concerned with others.

Little by little, I began to discover that most people are insecure to some degree. Time after time, I met people who shared similar struggles. We all want to fit in and be accepted. Am I going to be the one who shrinks back, waiting for the other person to reach out to me? Or will I genuinely care about the other person’s needs and interests?

I heard a sermon on the Golden Rule that drove this lesson even further home. “*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.*” Somehow, I had always heard that command in the negative: **don’t** do what you wouldn’t want someone to do to you. But my pastor explained that this is a positive verse with a wide-open application: whatever I **would** want done for me, I should do for others.

Sadly, I still struggle with the dungeon, but, thankfully, I don’t live there anymore.

Ann Swindell, author of *Still Waiting: Hope for When God Doesn’t Give You What You Want*. I also took a Memoir Writing Workshop led by Ann. I am currently working on a devotional memoir titled *Life Lessons from a Slow Learner*, in which I share vignettes from my life of ways God helped me grow to a truer picture of Himself and how much He loves me – through books, music, sermons, life experiences, and Christian counseling. **JL**

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# BREAK the SPELL

I had heard a narrative from a lot of people about 2018, that it was a painful, difficult year and they were ready to be done with it. I have too much value for my time and efforts to mentally abandon a year and write it off in my history books as a “bad year. But I too had a few painful things happen in 2018.



BY MIKE MAESHIRO

Someone I mentored was blowing up their life and rumors got spread that I had encouraged this outcome. My city caught fire and we had to evacuate. A few of my close friends lost their homes. It was tragic. I hustled for a specific result in my business endeavors and failed four times in my attempts to go after the same goal that year.

When you’re in the dark parts of your heart, not sure of which direction things are supposed to be going, it’s easy to feel the

shame and accusation coming against you, trying to convince you that you’re an awful person, you’re not good enough, you were a fool for trying, it’s not worth it, forget everyone, run away.

“...the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

It’s not how many times you fall down that counts, it’s how many times you get back up. Life is going to hit you. Some people get hit harder than others and some people take more damage than others. But regardless of the pain count, it’s the people who can play injured that take my respect; the brave who can take the hits and still have enough fire in them to keep going.

You guys, when the enemy punches you in the gut and you roll around on the ground because the pain is so intense, the best thing to do is get back up and punch him square in the teeth. You know how you do that? You stand up. You don’t accept the shadows, don’t accept defeat. Don’t accept the idea that you belong on the floor, that your voice should be shut up, that your hope was wrong or foolish. You grab that hope and you keep doing you. It’s hard, it takes guts to choose out of the slop but when you don’t let the death sentence on your head take you out, you break it.

Now get up, you beautiful human, you. Go do what the good Lord made you for; go win. **JL**

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#### James J.S. Johnson, J.D., Th.D.

Chief Academic Officer, ICR’s School of Biblical Apologetics. His law degree from University of North Carolina. His background in forensic science, his trial attorney and judicial experience, plus his doctorate in theology have equipped him well to analyze and substantiate the Biblical and scientific evidence for creation.

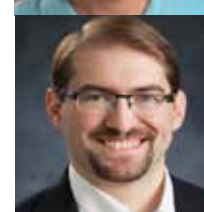


#### Mike Riddle, M.A., M.S.

Founder & President of Creation Training Initiative. Former USMC Captain, National Track & Field Champion, Author, Instructor at ICR and AIG, NASA and University Lecturer. Mike is a former high school teacher.



Dan Biddle, Ph.D. Founder and President of Genesis Apologetics, Inc., Northern California’s largest creation ministry which is dedicated to equipping pastors, youth pastors, parents and students with Biblical answers to evolutionary teaching in public schools.



David Gunn, Ph.D. (ABD) Director of Regular Baptist Press. Adjunct Professor of Apologetics, Clark Summit University’s M.A. program in Biblical Apologetics, also at SBC&GS. A captivating speaker on contemporary apologetics, including creation, Biblical inerrancy and hermeneutics.



David Nicholas, M.S., Th.M., Th.D. Director, Alpha Omega Conference, President, Professor of Theology & Apologetics at SBC&GS. Bible teacher, Truth for Today Radio, Author: *Foundations of Biblical Inerrancy, Covenant Theology: Final Solution or Forced System? & How to Know Without a Doubt that Heaven is Your Eternal Home.*



#### Randall Price, Ph.D.

Founder & President, World of the Bible Ministries, Executive Director of the Center for Judaic Studies & Professor of Jewish Studies, Liberty University. Archaeologist, Director, site excavations for the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr. Price was recently featured on the cover of *National Geographic Magazine* (12/18).



#### Andy Woods, J.D., Th.M., Ph.D.

Senior pastor of Sugar Land Bible Church, President of Chafer Theological Seminary. Lawyer and specialist on Biblical Prophecy, particularly as it relates to the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ, Author: *The Coming Kingdom*, which details how Kingdom Now Theology is changing the focus of the church.



#### Carl Morgan, M.Div., Ph.D.

Lead elder of Woodland United Fellowship and founder, director and curator of the Woodland Museum of Biblical Archaeology. Dr. Morgan’s captivating account of his involvement in the discovery of the Biblical city of Sodom at the excavation of Tall el-Hammam is unforgettable!



Prof. Tom Meyer, M.A. Assistant professor of Biblical Studies, archeology and Bible Memorization at SBC&GS, widely known Bible Memory Man for his dramatic recitation and exposition of Scripture from memory.



George Gunn, Ph.D. Chair, Bible Dept., & V P for Student Services at SBC&GS. Prophecy specialist & Israel tour leader. Contributing author: *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology, Journal of Dispensational Theology & Bib Sac.*





BY SUSAN U. NEAL  
RN, MBA, MHS

Susan U. Neal RN, MBA, MHS is on a mission to improve the health of the body of Christ. She is the author of five books including *7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates*. For additional healthy living resources go to **SusanUNeal.com**. Her award winning book *Christian Study Guide to Get off Sugar and Carbohydrates* (On Amazon) is helping Christians reclaim their health.

# Granny Sue's Granola

## INGREDIENTS

8 cups organic oats  
1 cup almonds  
1 cup pecans  
1 cup walnuts  
1/2 cup sunflower seeds  
1/3 cup sesame seeds  
1/3 cup pumpkin seeds  
3/4 cup coconut or olive oil  
1/2-2/3 cup of honey

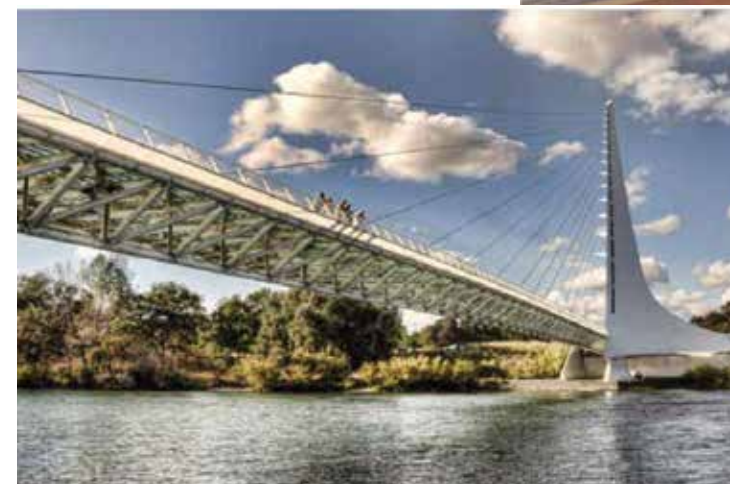
## DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients. Pour into two large greased baking pans. Bake at 325 degrees for 18-20 minutes; take out and stir. Cook for another 18-20 minutes, stir and add the following ingredients: 1-2 cups of dried fruit—berries, dates, apricots, raisins, or raisins. Cook for 10 more minutes. Store granola in two quart mason jars. Put one on the kitchen counter and the other in the refrigerator.



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