

Joyful

Winter 2023

Living



BY DONNA MATTISON

Feature story
**WOMEN IN
BUSINESS**

Page 20

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Joyful Living Magazine is committed to embracing a lifestyle of joy and abundance.

We have been independently owned and operated since 1992. Our desire is to serve and respect our community. We are a platform for beauty, goodness and grace. 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.

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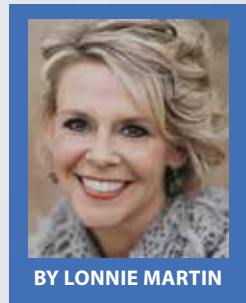
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BY LONNIE MARTIN

All I want for Christmas is **MORE** *Presence.*

There's a magic in the air when the evenings become darker, the air becomes colder and fall gently gives way to winter. As all of nature begs us to pause and slow and sip, it seems as if every store is pushing us to rush and spend and spin through each season. Woven through every window display is a motive to keep us in motion. No sooner than pumpkins are put away, Christmas moves to the clearance aisle and Valentines is rolled out before the year has even come to a close.

As we spend our days working hard and hunting for that perfect gift to place beneath the tree, we utter words like, "I don't know what to get them, they already have everything" or "everything they want they buy for themselves." When people say, "What do you want for Christmas?," a common response is "I don't know, just give me a gift card." Then there is the thrifting and re-gifting as we

With life whirling and twirling past us, we can become lost in the ultimate time warp.

call it when we shop in our own closets and find last year's gift card still in a drawer. Yes! Score! We slip it in a card and someone we love has just been checked off the list. It starts to feel so disingenuous. We have heard it is better to give than to receive, and though it's true, I often stop and ask myself, what am I truly giving?

What if we shifted our focus from "presents" to presence. Having two teenage boys, presenting this new concept creates the ultimate eye roll. However, I know that though their stockings will be filled and the tags on many bags will bear their names, the investment in their presents has a very short-lived return rate. What I also know, is the true gift of presence will water seeds inside of their hearts that will continue to grow, even if slow, over time.

It's so easy to appease our kids with expensive gaming systems or even a few bucks from time to time. With this approach, instant grati-

fiction is fed and connection is starved. With life whirling and twirling past us, we can become lost in the ultimate time warp. If we do not slow, or dare I say stop, before we know it, our gangly little reclusive teens will be college kids with their own cars, their own lives, and their own plans. I don't want to take a moment for granted no matter what the cost.

Extra time is as rare as extra cash these days, but ultimately I will spend both "some-where" on "something." My challenge to myself is to spend "some time" on "someone," or in this case, too someone's. Life is expensive and having kids could make you bankrupt. We need to be wise with our spending and generous with our giving. We have to ask ourselves what am I willing to give and at what cost. For my kids, I would gladly spend lavishly the time that I have to be fully present with them.

This year for Christmas, I don't want presents, I want more presence. To sit at the table and share a meal and play a boardgame; to decorate the tree together and watch Christmas movies; to build snowmen and make candy. I want to invest all I have, give all I've got, and spend all my time lavishly on the gift of presence. JL

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I have a radical idea! What if.....? Let me start with a story.

Several years ago, Pastor Perry Peterson of Crossroads Church of Anderson felt called to begin praying for community, including schools. His congregation came along beside him to join him in this mission. They began going to schools and praying over them. The community liaison for Anderson schools organized a bus tour for business leaders and pastors to let the community know about the various schools in the district. On the tour, they met the principal of each school and were able to ask questions. He asked if he could pray for them. "There's an open door if we go with a heart of service", says Pastor Peterson.

Praying for connection with schools fueled more passion. One school had been vacant for many years and they began to pray over that site, believing God for His plan. Prayer walking became a natural part of their church.

That ministry has continued with faithfulness and consistency. The congregation goes to schools, with a heart to bless, bringing treats, putting on barbecues, implementing teacher appreciation days, and continuing to pray. The result? There has been leadership change, more peace in the classrooms, happier teachers, lots of testimonies from the various school sites. And that vacant site? It's now a thriving K – 8 school, a vibrant part of the community of Anderson!

Back to the "what if". What if every church adopted a neighborhood school, with a heart to serve and bless and believe that God really CAN make a difference? There is no greater mission field than our schools. The challenges are more serious and seemingly insurmountable than they've ever been. Parents, teachers, students, staff and administrators need support like never before. And I believe prayer is the missing link.

Of course it doesn't have to be a church. It could be any group or organization you are a part of. And if that doesn't exist yet, start one! Do we believe God is faithful? Do we believe prayer makes a difference? Are you willing to be part of an incredibly essential ministry that will absolutely make a difference? If this idea resonates with you, talk to your pastor or group leader (or BECOME a leader) and see how you can play a role in this important movement. Let's get started!

cwertz@simpsonu.edu – Let me know which school you've adopted and ideas you have for serving. I'm really excited to see what happens! **JL**



BY DR. 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 cwertz@simpsonu.edu



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Joy in the Mourning

Reinvent the Reason – Not Yourself



BY RENAE TOLBERT

and *Birds and Blooms* magazine. Sadly she passed away a few years ago from cancer. She will always be remembered.

Renae Tolbert lived in Redding, where she wrote short stories, enjoyed the outdoors and wildlife photography. She worked at Shasta College. Her "Creator's Touch" prints and greeting cards of local wildlife and scenery can be purchased at Enjoy the Store on Placer Street in downtown Redding. She's been published in *Cup of Comfort for Christian Women*, *Guideposts* Heavenly Company anthology,

My loss was my husband. For you, it may be a child, a parent or beloved pet. It's difficult to imagine joy in our mourning and time of grief. We are immersed in our pain, completely devastated and at a loss about what our day or next minutes will hold. We are barely able to consider tomorrow without tears, much less joy in our hearts.

The first months, I found myself asking: Who am I now? What will I do? What is my purpose in life? Who will I cook for? Why will I cook at all? Who will I make chocolate chip cookies for? Will I have reason to clean the house, mow the lawn, buy groceries or wash the windows? After all, everything I did was for him because I loved him, I wanted to serve him, I wanted his home to be clean and lovely and look nice. I loved

honoring him by doing things for him. Suddenly, there were no reasons for anything I did anymore. Life as I knew it was stripped away. I felt I needed to reinvent myself.

I began to find new reasons to do them these things. Many days, giving up certainly felt easier, but with God's help through my friends, my church family and co-workers, I began to see purpose one task at a time, yet; even still, each task was like trudging through wet cement.

When we suddenly lose what gave us our reason to put our feet on the floor every morning and press "start" on the coffee maker, it feels like we have nothing left because our purpose left with our loved one. We are alone, empty and broken.

I discovered that finding the things that brought me joy apart from Herb helped. For me, it was wildlife photography. This was hard at first because I was always so excited to show Herb the pictures I took. He was my biggest fan and in his opinion, I never took a bad photo. For a spell, it was painful, so I avoided photography. Then I realized Herb wouldn't want me to stop taking pictures of wildlife. It was my passion. So I inundated my friends with photos on Facebook and that fulfilled my need to share the amazingsness of God's creatures, big and small, in the air, water and on ground!

I have attended some musicals, plays, and events. Going alone doesn't bother me, and I find more joy each time I go

outside my comfort zone. I have flown to Southern California by myself 3 times. It is quite a feeling of freedom.

On a more adventurous note: I got out the chainsaw and cut some large limbs off the tree. When my lawnmower needed a tune up, I watched a tutorial on YouTube and changed the filter, spark plug, oil, and replaced the blade. Talk about empowerment! I landscaped my back yard and planted a flower garden -figuring it all out, onmy own.

Twenty months into this journey, I still cook, clean house, buy groceries, wash windows and obviously, I still mow the lawn. Once in a while, I make chocolate chip cookies. Why? Because it's who I am. I didn't need to reinvent myself after all. I needed to reinvent the REASON! Empowering myself, changing my perspective and taking

charge of my thoughts has been key for my healing.

Your joy will come. Each day that passes, you discover new reasons for doing things you used to do. You will feel empowered and you may feel guilty for feeling that way, or for feeling a new freedom. But know this, God will sustain you, provide for you, and equip you with all you need to put your feet on the floor and press "start" on the coffee maker every single morning.

"Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day."

Persevere and go in FAITH and discover new reasons for all you do, and find Joy in your Mourning. JL

Empowering myself, changing my perspective and taking charge of my thoughts has been key for my healing.



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How to Create COZY VIBES in Your Home



BY SARAH WIND



As the temperatures turn chilly, our homes become a warm refuge from the elements as we turn up the furnace or light the fireplace or woodstove. But more than literally providing warmth, homes can offer emotional warmth, such as the feeling you may have experienced when you set foot in your grandmother's or other loved one's house.

We all want a respite from the hustle and bustle of daily life when we enter our front door. With a little intentionality, creating cozy vibes in our homes is possible.

The first and most obvious way is to redecorate. Choose a color theme that flows from the living to dining room, and

swap out décor and art to match that theme. Inspiration could come from perusing the home décor aisles of stores or looking online. Start on the front porch with seasonal touches like a different rug, potted plants, or illuminated greenery. Inside, set slippers in a basket by the front door. Luxurious throw blankets and textured pillows on the sofa are an invitation to recline and relax. Electric or real fire in the fireplace, candles, and fairy lights say stay awhile.

There's nothing like the scent of fresh baked goods and homemade soup wafting through the air and tickling the tastebuds. Whip out those old family recipes or try new ones this season. Having friends over for a meal or simply tea or coffee and a treat like pumpkin bread or cinnamon rolls will surely make them feel like guests of honor.

Don't forget about your bedroom. Flannel or extra soft sheets, a different duvet/comforter, and a shearling rug can elevate the coziness factor. A hot water bottle can also keep your feet warm at night. Aromas from spritzing or diffusing essential oils will help you unwind as well.

Feeling cozy isn't solely about the décor and pleasing the five senses. It also the attitude of the homeowner that creates a warm, welcoming, peaceful atmosphere. It can be easy to let the cares and burdens of everyday life seep into the fabric of our homes. Releasing worry and anxiety and receiving peace and joy won't just help us feel good, it will create peaceful vibes that have a calming effect on others. Praying to and focusing on Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is a sure way to stay grounded.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Embrace the change of seasons. Make your home a cozy shelter that emanates light, joy, warmth, and restorative rest. **JL**



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Wind's Pumpkin BREAD

*Makes one loaf

Preheat oven to 350 degrees	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 Cup white sugar	1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 Cup oil (like canola or coconut cooking oil)	1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs	1/4 teaspoon cloves
1 Cup pumpkin (canned)	1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 Cup water	1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1 1/2 Cup plus 3 tablespoons flour	1/4 teaspoon allspice (optional)

Mix all ingredients with an electric mixer. Pour into greased and floured bread loaf pan. BAKE for 50-60 minutes. Test to make sure it's done in the middle. You may have to bake it longer. Remove from oven and cool for 15 minutes. Flip to remove from pan. After it is done cooling, wrap in aluminum foil.

OPTION: 1 can of pumpkin has about 2 cups in it, so if you use the whole can, you can double the recipe. JL



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BY ROBIN LITTAU

Coordinating **CHAOS** from *Culture*

Last week an anonymous friend placed a cute computer mouse pad on top of my work supplies. I happily took it home, the colors coordinate with my desk, and the words accurately describe my life: Chaos Coordinator!

This phrase has been circling in my thoughts all week because it accurately describes so much of modern family life in our swirling busy culture! We are all bombarded with tidal waves of non-essential information, busy with distractions, overextended with emotional exhaustion, surrounded with identity crisis, robbed of our precious time for meaningless priorities, and far removed from authentic human connections that truly satisfy our thirsty souls. Men, Women, and Children: ALL of us!

It's easy to observe one another wandering through our days not knowing our life's purpose or having a clear definition of our why's. For example, why are we (yes myself included) consistently buying \$6.00 coffee's or eating non-nutritious-but delicious fast food, when according to money.usnews.com, "The average price per serving of home cooked meals is \$4.31 – while the average cost of eating out is \$20.37" and \$6,568 is the average American credit card debt? If we



are carelessly chaotic with our food and finances, how are we doing with our family connections and our own heart's needs?

I don't love quoting sad facts, so I won't, but there's plenty to cry about with a quick google search of many cultural issues: Divorce, Depression, Suicide, Anxiety, Pornography, Substance use and Social Media addictions for adults and kids. Cultural chaos is swirling around us all, constantly feeding our tidal waves of misdirected focus toward pain above purpose. Hence the necessity for a Chaos Coordinator to arise from the most important haven of refuge on earth: Home.

What exactly is a Chaos Coordinator? Urbandictionary.com defines it as "Someone who does precision guesswork based on unreliable data provided by those of questionable knowledge, a miracle worker who keeps the company going by leading, organizing, planning, and delivering with a smile fueled by passion and caffeine, an expert problem solver, or an expert at juggling insane amounts of activities at any given moment. See also wizard, magician, miracle worker."

First, I want to knight you into the entrusted role of Chaos Coordinator. It's not scary, impossible, or hopelessly delusional, I promise. It's a high-level position that rises above the mess, to coordinate an eagle's soaring perspective of insight and solution for every arising problem. Most of us are operating at this essential level because it's essential. We are strong pillars for our families, carrying levels of responsibility that can seem crushing some days, yet we remain standing. I want to share some chaos coordinating tips I've acquired through the storms.

1. During Chaos: simplify everything. (Disperse chores, use paper plates, Purge clutter, budget wisely for essentials first.)
2. Mindset is everything...if you rehearse "I can't," you definitely won't. If you believe "I can," you will! Get curious on your limiting thoughts, while flooding out lies with positive spoken truths. We feed our inner dialogues non-stop, so feed your command center with full measured hope, potential, limitlessness, inspiration, and beauty! Be full of positive disillusion and anchor yourself in hope!
3. Prioritize connection with yourself first. We cannot give on an empty tank! (Essentials are sleep, water, food, friends and simple fun-yes, I said FUN is ESSENTIAL!)
4. Prioritize connection with your loved ones. This is your support system, so keep it strong through intentional love filled conversation, family meetings, 1:1 time, and kindness! The hard times are when your best is required for the most important people, it's not a good moment to spew out our worst.
5. Set tangible solutions to problems, with practical goal steps. Clarify what you need to get from A to B rather than circling around frustrations endlessly.
6. Get vision! Journal, draw, imagine yourself where you most want to be. Take small action steps towards achieving the dreams of your heart: today! Even in the eye of the storm.
7. Grant yourself and others full permission to be human, making human mistakes. Healthy communication, forgiveness and a good will perspective will protect your hearts like a shield of love around every challenge. Keep love as your highest response and reaction.
8. It only takes one intentional moment in time, one connecting conversation, and one working solution to solve a problem to facilitate a change. Practice creates new pathways one step at a time, so practice becoming who you most want to be! Each moment is NEW. Each day is unwritten! JL



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Morning Walks



When it rains, it pours. That's what they say. For me, triplet storms are the norm.

I stare at my reflection, unable to recognize the face staring back at me. Eleven years ago, BK (Before Kids), I used to be pretty. Not drop-dead gorgeous, but cute enough to get a second look or an occasional honk or whistle from a passing car (back when that was still allowed). Investing all my time and energy into giving my children the best opportunities possible has enabled them to flourish, but has left me depleted. My previously toned body appears lifeless and drained. Muscle definition is non-existent. My hairstyle is a permanent ponytail. Is this really me?

Hubby arrives home to the bombardment of children on all sides. Everyone wants his attention all at once. Lifting the baby to his hip and grabbing a toddler hand, our eyes meet. His look speaks



BY TERESA LINDAHL

she speaks at women's retreats and writes on her blog at tessalind.substack.com.

Tessa is a wife and mother of four adult children, whom she homeschooled for 22 years. She is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music, teaching private piano lessons to 60 kids each week. Passionate about sharing how Jesus shaped her during life's struggles, Tessa's stories unfold as

sheer exhaustion. I can tell by his smile that he just needs to unwind from the day, relax and be alone, but that quiet place is difficult to find with a houseful of kiddos. Life at work must be more peaceful than this. The void in my heart makes me realize it has been a while since we have talked, just the two of us, uninterrupted. The distance between us is mere feet, but the chasm feels far and wide. Is this really us?

I'm folding the mountain of laundry heaped upon my bed and spy the cover of my Bible on my dresser. The sun's rays expose the specks of dust previously hidden in the dark. I let the partially folded onesie fall from my hand and gently, longingly wipe the filth of time from the neglected Word. Pray without ceasing. How am I supposed to do daily spend time in God's Word, pray, and train up my children to know the One True God, when I have mouths to feed and laundry to fold and shopping to do? Is this really life?

A failure. Defeated. Incompetent. Moms have existed since Eve birthed Cain. Somehow everyone else is able to get it all done. Moms remain fit, have strong marriages, and maintain their faith. Maybe it's just me.

The house is preciously still with slumbering babes. Hubby gently taps the empty spot on the couch next to him, beck-

oning me to come and sit with him. Just the two of us. The floodgates open as my defeated heart struggles to make sense of my ineptness.

"We could start walking every morning before I go to work," Hubby suggests.

"What would we do with the kids?" I counter.

"Our oldest is twelve! If she's old enough to babysit other people's kids, surely we can leave them alone and asleep while we go for a walk!" Hubby returns.

One mile a morning turns into two, eventually doubling to four. Speed walking together, twenty miles per week, the muscle tone begins to return to our previously unused bodies. As we walk, we talk. The man I fell in love with so many years ago is still there and still mine; I just hadn't been able to see him through the wall which had

been erected between us. As we walk, we begin to pray. This unique bond begins to build between the three of us as we walk and talk and pray.

Hubby and I just celebrated our 15th anniversary of walking together. We continue to walk through these storms of life, with our bond growing stronger every step. Even if our umbrella flips inside-out, we know He will always hold us fast. JL

I can tell by his smile that he just needs to unwind from the day, relax and be alone, but that quiet place is difficult to find with a houseful of kiddos.

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The Great Amen



BY DR. MARY MITCHELL

After Mary graduated from The Ohio State University in sawmill management. She worked at two pulp and paper mills in Puget Sound, Washington. Later she accepted the Wood Fiber Manager position at a new 50 MW wood-fired power plant in Anderson, CA. A decade later, she became the manager and grant writer for the 1.6 million acre Western Shasta Resource Conservation District in Shasta County, California, which was awarded millions in grant funds for stream and fisheries restoration and healthy forest projects.

She unexpectedly found herself in a correspondence ministry with prisoners who had read her magazine articles.

Mary lives in Cottonwood, CA with her husband, Paul, and two tabby cats.

I don't use Amen very often, but in reality, we unconsciously say Amen to things all the time. Whenever we give the full power of our mental acceptance to something, we're saying Amen, and so it is, and that thought is an energy that begins to manifest in our conscious world.

How do we use Amen unconsciously? When someone says, "I'm sick and tired," I hear Amen. I know they believe it. Amen to limitation. So, I ask you, are you saying Amen to mediocrity? Are you saying Amen to pain and small disappointments? Are you saying Amen to an unhealthy relationship? For example, when we judge someone as annoying, really annoying, we're saying Amen to that. What we've actually

done is we've limited that person's expression of how we see them in our life.

Amen keeps us from seeing anything else in that person—they're just annoying. But the truth is no one's perfect. If instead we say Amen to the goodness in a person, it leaves room for the relationship to blossom and change. It gives everyone an opportunity to be more than what they were previously.

Consider Amen as a rubber stamp and stamp it all over the good you desire and the good you already have. In his book, *The Universe is Calling*, Eric Butterworth wrote, "Do not voice what you are not willing to rubber stamp Amen. Do not use your time to stamp Amen on problems, but instead, use

your time to stamp Amen on solutions.” Do I have an Amen?

The energy of Amen is acceptance, the freedom to believe what we want to believe. Today I invite you to think about the implications of your beliefs and visualize yourself rubber stamping Amen all over them. Is it a sick and tired belief or are you stamping Amen on the belief that good is happening in your world? Are you stamping Amen on fear or stamping Amen on knowing the truth that if there is a problem then there is a solution? When we watch news about a hurricane, are we saying Amen to the bad or are we blessing all involved knowing good can come out of a crisis? Let’s give our Amen to solutions.

How do we do this? One idea is when you think you have a problem, sit down and list all of the negatives about it and then list all of the positives. Then take an imaginary rubber stamp and joyously stamp Amen on all of the positives. Amen puts the full weight of your mental and emotional thought on the positives and synchronizes your energy with the force of subconscious mind that will work to bring solutions into existence.

The natural laws of the Universe are calling you to flow with the force within that transcends the facts. Why? It’s all energy. Whether its sickness or poverty, the possibility of remission and healing is always present. Be alert to what you accept as true for you. Don’t let other people or the news, tell you what to think, feel, or how to live. You may be fired from a job, but you can’t be fired from the universe. Each one of us is a vital part.

Here’s an example. When I decided to go to college in my late 20s, my goal was to graduate with a 3.0. I took classes all year long for three years and it was really hard. When I graduated, I had to laugh, my GPA was 3.1. And to this I said Amen! *JL*



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Grit & Grace Country Living



WOMAN *In Business*

BY DONNA MATTISON

Even as a youngster, I loved the idea of selling things to people. My mom helped me buy a kid-sized cash register so that I could play store. I sold and resold many of my toys to my sister, parents, dolls, or whomever would tolerate my fascination. It wasn't about the "money"; but rather about hearing that delightful ring when the cash register drawer opened! Little did I know that this act of excitement would spur my ability to create and set goals for the rest of my life.

Even as a youngster, I loved the idea of selling things to people. My mom helped me buy a kid-sized cash register so that I could play store. I sold and resold many of my toys to my sister, parents, dolls, or whomever would tolerate my fascination. It wasn't about the "money"; but rather about hearing that

delightful ring when the cash register drawer opened! Little did I know that this act of excitement would spur my ability to create and set goals for the rest of my life.

As a young adult, I worked as an insurance assistant, and then a legal assistant. I had no idea how much of a role these jobs would play in my life. The real lesson I gleaned from these experiences was to become adept in anticipating the needs of others and helping them meet those needs. Then, while my children were young, I sold Tupperware at in-home parties (Yep, I was the Tupperware Lady). I discovered that I had a knack for sales, and that I really loved working with people. My goals included driving a Tupperware minivan, becoming a manager, and earning status as one of top five-per-



cent sales representatives in the United States. I attained each of these goals by mapping out and executing the necessary work to make them happen.

During my children's elementary school years, I served as the PTA president. Through my committee and leadership experiences, I found that I enjoyed working with students. After my children entered junior high, I decided that I would return to college to become a teacher. I liked the idea of working with high school students because (1) they were old enough to articulate their feelings, and (2) I felt like I could help them learn good decision-making processes. During my many years in education, I was privileged to teach, advise, assist with mapping college plans, and help students explore future careers.

Utilizing my minor in psychology, specialized training in career planning, and even my salesmanship acumen, I demonstrated methods to students for goal-setting in achieving their future endeavors.

Last fall I opened Grit & Grace Country Living, a vintage-to-new shop in downtown Cottonwood. My goals now are to help small business merchants within the shop (all of whom are women) display, price and sell their wares, as well as to set goals for whatever it is they wish to achieve. It is indeed a culmination of the skills I have acquired through my varied careers and learning experiences. And, although my store's point of sale computer does not make that old-time cash register ring with customer purchases, I still hear it in my head, and smile, every time I make a sale! **JL**



BELLA VISTA FARMS ANIMAL SANCTUARY

BY CHIC MILLER

Nestled amongst huge oak trees and rolling hills, just a stone's throw from Cottonwood Creek, lies Bella Vista Farms Animal Sanctuary, owned by Bob and Chic Miller. The sanctuary is located fourteen miles west of Cottonwood, near Igo, in rural Northern California. The rescue originated in Bella Vista in 1989, thus the name, Bella Vista Farms. In 1997, the farm moved to a beautiful spacious, 45 acres on Lower Gas Point Road. In 2006, the farm became a licensed animal sanctuary and also a 501C3.

Chic is a retired nurse who does much of the medical care on the farm. Her day includes feeding, bathing and brushing the many animals in her care, also cleaning cages, corrals, and aviaries. In her "spare time" she writes animal care articles for local magazines and numerous newsletters.

Bob, a retired businessman, starts his day early, bringing

in hay from the fields, mending fences, building shelters, and seeing to it that the farm runs smoothly.

Many abused, abandoned, orphaned, and unwanted animals call Bella Vista Farms their home. Each has a name; each has a story. The rescue, fondly nick-named "The Farm of Kisses and Cookies," is home to horses, ponies, donkeys, cats, dogs, goats, sheep, alpacas, chickens, large parrots, and small birds. Bella Vista Farms is not an adoption center. When an animal arrives, the farm becomes their permanent home.

On a daily basis, the animals consume 25 pounds of dry dog food, 6 bales of hay, 50 pounds of grain, 10 pounds of dry cat food, 25 pounds of chicken scratch, 20 cans of wet dog food, and 25 pounds of parrot mix. In addition, rice and vegetables are cooked fresh each day for the dogs. The need for medications and miscellaneous supplies for the deaf, the blind, the diabetics, or those that have injuries or heart related problems is endless. Vet bills and dental care are also ongoing.

Sanctuaries such as Bella Vista Farms are necessary to help prevent animals from entering already over crowded shelters. Please do your part. Spay and neuter your family pet and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same! JL

Special Women By Nichole Donoghue

It is the women in our lives that hold us together,
Make strength even stronger; insist we are, we can do better!

Love so fiercely to us that we need to try harder because
they know our souls and know the powers
deep inside of us yearning to explode with brilliance,

They smell, touch, see and hear our potential with the greatest knowing,
gifted they are by the Creator God!

These beautiful women allow us to cry, allow us to be soft

These brave beautiful women shine light
into the bleakness of seemingly endless nights

They knit and weave together the tattered
and stained scrapes into gorgeous masterpieces

It IS the reflection of Gods merciful, uncompromising
eternal love you see in their eyes.
These are the women in our lives ~



HOLIDAY HAZARDS

BELLA VISTA FARMS ANIMAL SANCTUARY

It's here again, that time of year, the fast approaching holiday season. November brings Thanks giving, and, of course, Christmas in December. Then New Year's will be right around the corner. The season brings lots of fun, shopping, cooking, and get-togethers. Friends and Family will be visiting. It's a busy time of year. But holidays can create special dangers for your family pets. Each year thousands of our furry loved ones are seriously injured or become deathly ill during this fast paced time of year. We can easily become distracted by holiday activities and put our pets on "the back burner." Not a great idea! Mischievous pets can get into all sorts of trouble when normal routines are disrupted. For instance, Thanksgiving dinner will, of course, include turkey and all the trimmings. But remember, any poultry bones are very dangerous due to splintering that can cause internal damage. Table scraps given to your begging pooch by too many dinner guests can cause severe stomach upset, vomiting, and diarrhea. Watch those tempting hot containers or plates of food left on the coffee table or too close to the edge of the kitchen counter. Full trash cans left unattended can easily tip, getting your best pal into serious trouble that could cause a costly visit to your vet.

The Christmas season brings food, food, and more food. It seems the house is always full of tasty temptations. Be aware of dishes containing raisins, grapes, onions, chocolate, or macadamia nuts. They are all very toxic to your pet. Also be

aware that baking chocolate has nine times the toxic effects as regular chocolate.

Decorations are especially dangerous to your playful kitty. Choking can occur when tinsel, ribbons, bows, bubbling lights, angel hair, artificial snow, or broken ornaments become tempting toys. Hey! No chewing on electrical cords, Pal!

Toxic plants include poinsettias and holly, also juniper, cedar, pine and fir are not good chew toys. What Christmas would be complete without mistletoe? But be careful, the berries and leaves are highly toxic if ingested by your pet. A helpful phone number to keep on hand is the Poison Control Hot Line 1-888-426-4435.

Please pay attention to lit candles as well. Also, Christmas tree water is not a healthy thirst quencher.

The loud noises of fireworks cause many pets to bolt and get lost, possibly to get hit by a car or end up in a local shelter. Not a great start to a "happy" New Year! Think ahead - secure your pet before all the celebrating starts.

If you are traveling during the holidays, it's a good idea to call ahead to make sure that your pet is welcome at all of your stops. A pet carrier is a must. Often your pet is safest and most comfortable at home, of course, with a reliable pet sitter. JL



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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING:

Vital Skills for Our Kids' Success



BY EMILY SCOTT, PHD

Emily Scott, PhD, is a wife, stay at home mom of three, and part time parenting consultant and blogger who has written and spoken on various parenting topics including child development, ACEs, and tips on raising responsible kids. She has lived in the Redding area her whole life, and together with her husband help parents navigate the difficult aspects of parenting at Renewed Hope Parenting. Her website is emily@renewedhopeparenting.com

I can get exhausted keeping track of everything for all our kids. Life certainly gets easier when they learn to manage their own lives more. But that skill set won't just happen on its own. It needs to be fostered. Helping our kids develop their Executive Functioning (EF) skills will make everyone's lives easier and help set them up for success.

We need them to be able to remember, think about things from different angles, problem solve, organize, plan, set goals, and have self-control. These functions of the brain take place in the prefrontal cortex (which doesn't fully develop until around age 25). Remembering that this part of the brain hasn't fully developed allows us to have some empathy and patience when our kids struggle with remembering, or organizing, or problem-solving, or emotional self-regulation. And that's also why we need to give them lots of chances to practice and hone their brains.

The key components of EF are:
 The ability to focus, remember, or organize
 Setting goals
 Planning ahead
 Regulating self and emotions
 Thinking abstractly with flexibility and creativity

A few ways to foster this development:

1. Guide kids to self-manage or monitor their school work or schedule: Planners, lists, calendars, and reminders are all great ways to help us organize our lives. Starting in elementary school, we can guide our kids to use these to manage their own lives. Some kids will be better at this than others, but we can sow the seeds at young ages and give more and more independent responsibility as they get older.

2. Allow kids to make choices and have control in their lives: To help our kids develop their ever-important EF skills, we need to give them chances to make decisions with lots of small choices. Anything we don't need control over can be a kid's decision. From what color shirt they wear, to which vegetable they choose for dinner, to what they pack in their lunch, to how they want to raise money to buy something. Giving them choices helps them think about things and gives them control over their lives.
3. Goals: Help your kids set their own goals or set weekly or weekend goals together. Help them evaluate if the goals are realistic and manageable and what steps they need to take to achieve the goals. Let them see you doing the same in your own life. If they struggle, help them see times they did hard things and accomplished something.
4. Have positive conversations about growth mindset and perseverance: Grit, growth-mindset, and resilience are all different, but they are similar concepts. We can talk to our kids about never giving up and that challenges help us grow. Ask them what they can learn from setbacks. Mistakes help us learn and grow. Failure is not final.
5. Allow for rest and downtime: Ever notice how after school some kids just need to power down for a little bit to rest? We can easily get worn out using our EF skills and we need to provide opportunities to rest and regroup. Unstructured play is huge here, and not just for the little guys.
6. Encourage healthy friendships and relationships: Surrounding ourselves with healthy and positive people can help us be our best selves. Unhealthy relationships can have a negative impact on our mental health overall life.
7. Have hypothetical conversations about what-if situations: Future talk or talk about situations that could happen can help our kids critically and abstractly think, as well as problem solve. What would you do if *this* happened? How would you handle *this* scenario? These conversations can be a fun family experience.
8. Play memory games: Games can help with memory, focus, and creative thinking. We can play family board games so they can learn to see how others are thinking and how they can use that knowledge to win. Make sure these things are as close to real life as possible. Sure, doing memory games on an iPad can help, but it doesn't exactly mirror real life use of EF.
9. Openly model how you manage yourself: Not only should we show our kids how we manage our own schedules and to-dos, but we should also model how we manage our feelings. It's healthy to show our kids we also experience big, overwhelming feelings and what we do to manage those.
10. Self-Regulation: Learning to self-regulate is a huge part of growing up. We can help our kids learn

to self-regulate by modeling healthy ways to manage our own feelings, being empathic when they experience big feelings, labeling and processing emotions with them, and helping them find ways to solve problems or overcome uncomfortable feelings.

Remember: Empathy and connection are the foundations of our relationships with our kids. The stronger our bond, the more likely our kids will accept our help in helping them develop these skills. **JL**

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STOP *the* Negative Vortex



BY CHRISTY LARGENT

Christy is a positivity and midlife expert helping women make their midlife their happiest life. She's the founder of the Midlife Happylife Community and the author of the bestselling book, *31 Positive Communication Skills for Women*. Christy lives in Plano, TX with her two teenagers and very patient husband and can be found on all social channels @christylargent

Tatum loved her job. She knew her work as a social worker was changing lives every day. From meeting with prospective parents, to home studies, to finalizing the adoption in the courthouse, each part of the journey had its own distinct elements of joy and inspiration.

The problem was at her office. Her coworkers were so negative, many days she didn't even want to go into the office. The office gossip was continuous, the backstabbing perpetual, and any positive outcome was quickly spun into the most negative event of the week.

It was discouraging, depressing and frankly, Tatum was sick and tired of fighting it. It was easier to take her work to the local Starbucks and avoid the office like a plague.

Long term, she knew this strategy wouldn't work. But she didn't know what else to do. It was paralyzing.

I hear about office negativity regularly. Companies and organizations are dealing with this scourge on a daily basis. There's even a name for people addicted to negativity. They are called "Negaholics."

The good news is that there are some things we can do to minimize the negativity and stay engaged.

1. **Be Proactive with Positivity.** Smile. At everyone. Be lavish with recognition. Reward good work. Compliment your coworker on her fresh haircut. Smile some more. You have tremendous power to set the tone of your workplace.

When you come in with a positive mindset and contagious energy, you bring life and love to the office. "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." I say slather on that honey generously.

2. **Return the Negative with a Positive.** The problem is that negaholics feed on the negativity. The more it's engaged with, the more of it they do. If you don't respond the right way, the negaholic will just dig deeper. So the key is to respond correctly.

When you hear your co-worker Melanie say, "Did you hear how Sarah got called into the boss's office this morning?" Calmly answer, "I really appreciate how Sarah is so diligent with her work." Then smile. Your positive response shows Melanie you're not playing her negaholic game.

3. **Make sure you're not contributing to the problem.** I hate to mention this, but sometimes we fall into looking at things with a negative perspective. Often we don't even realize it! So before you chime in or add on to a conversation, check yourself, and make sure you're bringing life not death.

"He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." Let's be diligent with speaking the truth in love.

It's never easy to combat negativity, but it's so worth it! Let's remember once again the truth. "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." It's our privilege to be positive speakers of life. Try it next time, and enjoy the difference you make.

Christy is a Professional Speaker focused in the area of Engagement. She specializes in opening events getting audience members energized and engaged or closing events helping them leave empowered to act.

Her clients would tell you their audiences love her funny stories & real life examples illustrating practical ways to apply what they've learned to bring about lasting positive change.

Christy has a diverse background having worked both in the US and internationally.

"He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin."

Christy is the co-host of the PBS-TV show, *The Forum*, has a podcast, *Encouraging Words for Working Moms* and is the author of the best-selling book, *31 Positive Communication Skills for Women*.

When she isn't speaking or coaching clients, you can find Christy sneaking in a workout or a quick lunch with her husband in between chauffeuring her 2 school aged kids to and from basketball and tennis practices.

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Unique Holiday Meal the Family will Enjoy



BY SUSAN U. NEAL
RN, MBA, MHS

Susan U. Neal, RN, MBA, MHS, is an author, speaker, and certified health and wellness coach whose background in nursing and health services led her to seek new ways to educate and coach others to overcome health challenges. Check out her award-winning best-seller *7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates* at SusanUNeal.com.

LAMB CHOPS WITH PLUM SAUCE

(Makes 4–6 servings)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 pounds lamb chops | 1 teaspoon rosemary |
| 3 plums, chopped | 1/3 teaspoon salt |
| 1/2 onion, chopped | 4 tablespoons olive oil |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced | |

Chop plums and onions. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a skillet. Add the onion and cook for five minutes. Add minced garlic and cook for one minute. Add the plums and cook for 10 minutes, stirring often. Turn off the heat and set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in another skillet. Sauté the lamb chops for 8 minutes on each side. Serve the chops with the plum sauce on top.



ARUGULA POMEGRANATE SALAD

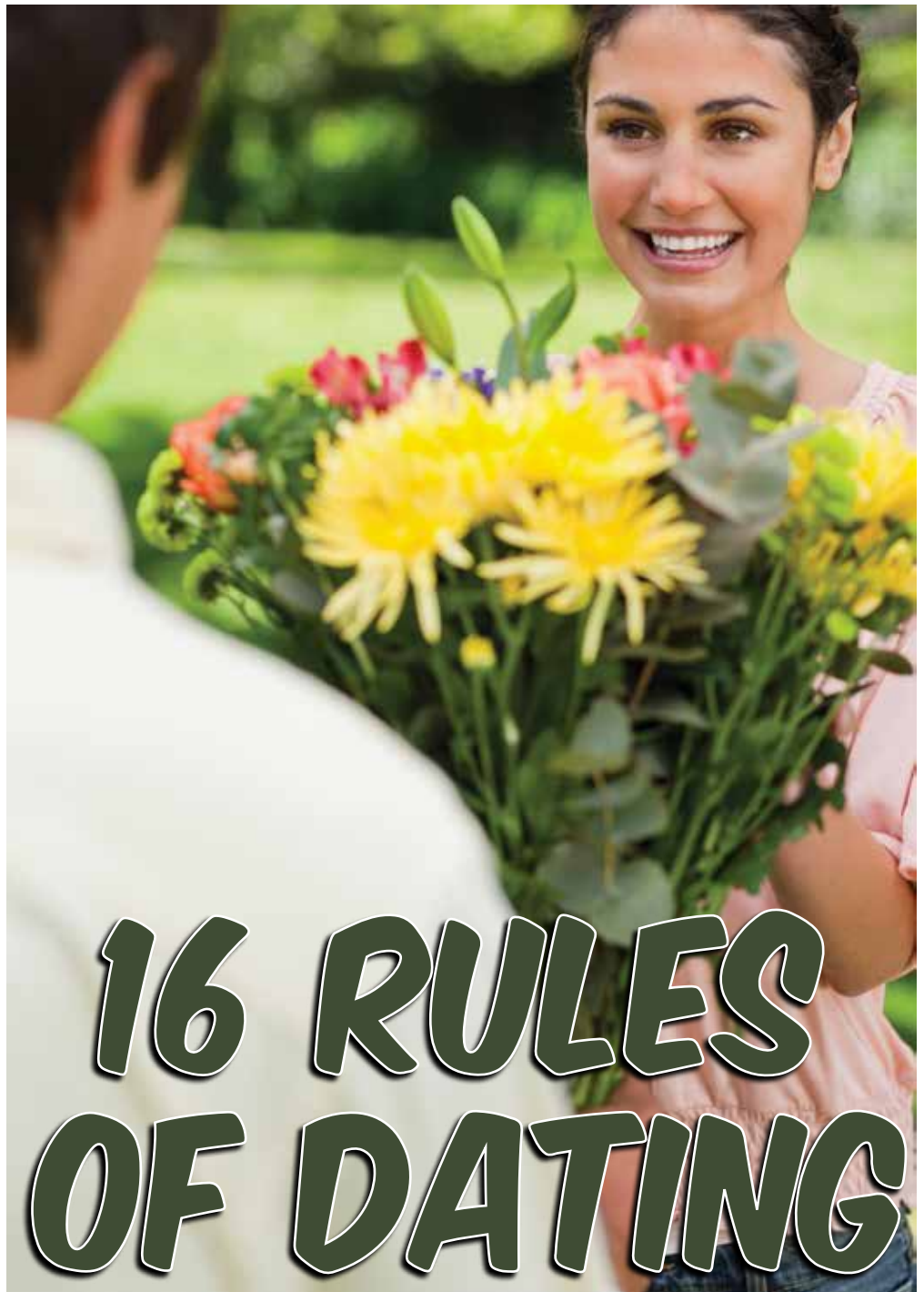
(Makes 4 servings)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 package prewashed arugula | Olive oil to taste |
| 1 pomegranate, seeded | Balsamic vinegar to taste |
| 1 cup raw pecans, chopped | |

Place the arugula in a large salad bowl. Remove the seeds from the pomegranate and add the seeds to the salad. Add pecans, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar. Toss and serve. **JL**



1. Know who you are so you aren't trying to get your identity from the people you date.
2. Make sure you make your intentions clear; are you trying to find a spouse, just having fun, etc? Then date people that are on the same journey as you are.
3. Don't create expectations you have no intention of fulfilling. Leading people on sucks.
4. If you are a virtuous person don't date an alley cat, date people who have great character.
5. Where you fish and the bait you use will determine the kind of fish, (person), you catch. If you are fishing at the bar, strip club, or porn site for example, you are not likely to find the "marrying kind."
6. If a person says, "If you really love me you would have sex with me," you have got the wrong person. If they really loved you they would respect your values and protect your personhood.
7. When looking for a spouse don't look for someone you could live with; look for someone you can't live without.
8. It's much easier to make a lover out of your best friend, than it is to make a best friend out of a lover. I hear people say, "I couldn't marry him (or her), he (or she) is my best friend. Best friends make great lovers and amazing marriages.
9. Ladies, pay attention to how a guy treats his mother, that's most likely how he will treat you in time. Guys watch how a girl treats her dad, that's probably how she will treat you.
10. If you argue and fight while you are dating; marriage will make it worse. I promise you marriage wouldn't fix your relationship.
11. Self centered, selfish, and self-absorbed people make terrible spouses. Kind, self-aware, emotionally intellect people make great life companions. It's true that beauty is only skin deep but arrogance is ugly to the bone.
12. If a person doesn't respect themselves they won't respect you. If they don't love themselves they can't love you.
13. If a person will violate their relationship with God to please you; they just made you their god! Hopefully you can live up to the task because being god to someone is an impossible task.
14. Dating should be a journey into the lives of two people; a noble adventure into the unknown and a beautiful exploration of discovery. So communicate, dialogue and be transparent about how you feel, what you believe and



16 RULES OF DATING

what you love. Telling the person what they want to hear undermines the purpose of dating.

15. Don't marry the person you fall in love with. A fall is an accident, not an act of your will. If you fall once, chances are you will fall again for someone else. If you do fall in love you will need to grow in love because what you did on accident you will need to do on purpose.
16. Having sex before your married to keep someone is not only a bad plan, it never works. JL



BY KRIS VALLOTTON



3 Money Questions Every Couple Should Ask Before Marriage

If a person rushes in unprepared, money can be a huge issue in their marriage. But it doesn't have to be.

Last year Leon and I visited Southern California, where a pastor shared that Orange County has the most divorces in the entire nation. The two main causes are infidelity and finances.

Not because people don't have money—but because they have a lot of it.

Here are three money questions Leon and I believe every couple needs to talk about before getting married. These questions can help you get the money conversation started with your partner.

1. Are you a saver or a spender?

If your partner likes to spend every single penny they earn, that could be a problem if you are a saver.

Or if you love to spend money, and the other person wants to save all the time, that will eventually become a source of conflict in your marriage—unless you talk about it now. Different ideas about money don't have to be a deal breaker, but the two of you will need to learn how to compromise.

Set a budget you both agree on, starting with these two key items:

1. Generosity. How much do you want to give away each month (to a church, an organization, a family in need, etc.)?
2. Savings. Discuss how much you want to save each month, and set up a systematic monthly savings plan.

When you know in advance how much you're going to save and how much you're going to spend each month, this awareness allows you to sidestep a lot of tension and conflict.

2. What are your financial goals?

Get on the same page with your partner. Talk about the future, and make sure you have similar financial goals:

- Do you want to own a home?
- Do you want to have kids? How many?
- Are you hoping to send the kids to a state school or to a private university?
- Do you want to retire early?
- How important is investing to you? What kinds of investments?

3. As a couple, how much do you owe?

If you or your partner has a lot of debt, it is likely a good idea to postpone the wedding for a season—until a good portion of that debt can be cleared up. Don't step into a marriage where debt is a heavy chain.

Ask your partner these questions:

- What are their thoughts about debt?
- How much debt do they currently have?
- How do they feel about using credit?

Get the money conversation started with your partner.

Asking those questions can help form a connectedness between you and your partner, where you can more easily see your partner's care for you and what your future marriage will look like.

Money does not have to be a weak place in your marriage. Instead, it can be something that draws you and your partner closer together. **JL**



BY SALOMÉ AND LEON ROAT

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