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# KNOWLEDGE IS WELLTH

The recent state of the world has given us all reason to take pause, and the consensus is that as we have emerged from our shelter-in-place cocoons, wellness, self-care and health are at the forefront of most people's minds. From financial wellness to healthy relationships to far-flung retreats, here's a look at how to inject a little self-love into your life.

By Casey Gillespie



**Color has long been known to be a powerful communication tool and can be used to cause reactions, alter thinking, suppress or stimulate appetite and can even raise blood pressure.**

## COLOR ME WELL

Have you ever noticed that when you walk into a spa you immediately feel more serene? Most yoga studios understand the importance of a calming color palette as well, and it is not by chance. Color has long been known to be a powerful communication tool and can be used to generate reactions, alter thinking, suppress or stimulate appetite and can even raise blood pressure — so just imagine how important color choices are in our homes.

The Environmental Protection Agency reports that the average American spends 87 percent of their time indoors, so to say that interior design and color choices are important is an understatement. And no one knows this better than Florence McLaughlin, the color specialist behind

Mill Valley's **Eye For Color** (eyeforcolor.marin.com). She says, "To create a feeling of well-being, you need to feel cozy and cared for. Color can achieve that." One important factor to keep in mind is that "it differs from room to room because the same color will read differently depending on the amount of light." Where to start? "Soft muted tones like water colors can contribute to your wellness," says McLaughlin. And perhaps more important in a place like Marin, you should take inspiration from the surrounding nature. "If you have a fig tree outside consider that for your palette. If you live by the water use the bay colors with its grays, blues and greens," she adds, recommending that you change the colors every couple of years.

But color choices extend past what you use on the walls. Linens, textiles and furniture all contribute to the overall ambiance of a space — and are much easier to swap out when you need a change. "Surround yourself in really comfortable fabrics and textiles. Wear cashmere and linen. Add a throw made of natural fibers like alpaca or even nice cotton and lots of faux fur," says McLaughlin, adding that her favorite shop for these items is Coyuchi (coyuchi.com) in Point Reyes, because the brand uses organic and sustainable materials. "Wrapping ourselves in comfort is really important for wellness. And choose all-natural fibers for clothing, sleepwear, bedding and throws — in your favorite color scheme, of course."



## HOLISTIC HEALTH

"Having a healthy physical body or absence of disease doesn't alone achieve wellness. To achieve wellness, we need to have a healthy mind, healthy habits, a healthy exercise routine, healthy coping mechanisms and healthy emotional healing," says Zohreh Sadeghi, doctor of Ayurvedic medicine and founder and director of San Francisco's **Roha Center for Healing Arts** (rohasf.com). Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest holistic healing practices, was developed more than 3,000 years ago in India and is popular with people who have a devoted yoga practice or who prefer a gentle food-as-medicine approach.

"Ayurveda and yoga are sister sciences ... they have the same goal, opening up the channels within the body and the mind in order to release and eliminate *ama* (physical, mental and emotional toxins) to make the entire being more *sattvic* (good, pure, clean)," adds Sadeghi. Ayurveda incorporates yoga asanas (postures), pranayama (breath work) and meditation as tools to bring the body back into balance,

but Sadeghi is quick to point out that in order to become more in tune with your body you must "distinguish between the messages your mind is sending you versus what your body is telling you."

Have you ever noticed that during times of extreme emotional stress you feel like you have a physical injury even though you haven't done anything to cause it? There is a reason for that. "Ayurveda believes that a person's state of mind has a great impact on their overall health and well-being. A healthy mind will lead to a healthy body and vice versa," she says. "When there is an imbalance within the mind it could show itself through different physical symptoms. And when there is agony or pain within the body, the mind becomes uneasy, restless and agitated."

Unlike Western medicine, which focuses on treating symptoms, Ayurvedic medicine revolves around prevention. "We have special methods for rejuvenating the body and the mind. So, it's highly beneficial to see an Ayurvedic doctor even when you're healthy and don't feel any symptoms within your body," she says. Want to learn more? Sadeghi recommends *Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing: A Practical Guide* and *The Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies*, both by Vasant Lad.

**HAPPY NOT PERFECT**

## HAPPY DAYS

The benefits of meditation are well documented and while mindfulness might seem like a passing trend, our money is on the fact that it is here to stay. There is an increasing focus on mental health in America and self-help tools are on the rise. One favorite is the **Happy Not Perfect** app (happynotperfect.com). It takes meditation, journaling and gratitude and adds a healthy dose of fun for what it calls a Happiness Workout. In less than five minutes, the app guides you through ways to let go of stress, helps you create a gratitude practice and ends with a short meditation that sets you up for the day. It's the mental health workout we have all been waiting for.

Photo by Eileen Roche Photography



## OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

According to the Global Wellness Institute, wellness tourism was a \$639 billion industry in 2017 and it is predicted to reach an estimated \$919 billion by 2022. So it is no wonder that luxury resorts aiming to help guests regain some balance in their lives are popping up all over the globe. While Covid-19 has certainly thrown a wrench into our 2020 travel plans, not surprisingly, it's these wellness getaways that people are craving the most. Our tip? Do your research, book now and travel later. Here are some ideas to get you started.

### ART OF BATHING

For those really wanting to get away and immerse themselves in another culture's wellness practices, **Hoshino Resort's Hoshinoya Guguan** ([hoshinoya.com/guguan/en](https://hoshinoya.com/guguan/en), from \$609 per night), located in the hot spring region of Taichung, Taiwan, is the Japanese-style escape we have all been dreaming of. At this resort, the art of bathing coupled with unparalleled Japanese hospitality is at the heart of the experience. Each room has a semi-open-air bath where guests can enjoy their own private hot spring with soft, low-alkaline, naturally carbonated water that flows directly from the source. The resort's public spaces are also designed around the flowing waters of the hot spring and guests are invited to enjoy the healing waters in the large public outdoor bath, the water garden and the indoor baths. Dining options are as unique as the hotel's design — drawing inspiration from Japanese cuisine using Taiwanese cooking methods, each meal is a delicate dance of art and nourishment. Guests won't want to miss the 1,300-meter promenade located behind the hotel for revitalizing walks in nature or the morning and evening stretching program, which is rooted in the ancient practice of qigong.

Top to bottom: Canyon Ranch Wellness Retreat Woodside; Four Seasons Sensei Lanai

## HOME ON THE RANCH

Back in November, Canyon Ranch, the OG of wellness retreats, opened its newest offering **Canyon Ranch Wellness Retreat Woodside** ([canyonranch.com/woodside](http://canyonranch.com/woodside), from \$899 per night), and for those looking for an immersive wellness experience a little closer to home, this is the ticket. The 16-acre property, located just south of San Francisco, offers an intention-based program using science-backed programming to create customizable holistic wellness journeys — from active to reflective — allowing guests to enjoy consciously crafted nutritious meals, expert-led workshops, fitness options galore and a team of specialists on hand to address every aspect of the wellness experience. *Canyon Ranch Wellness Retreat is scheduled to reopen on July 31.*



## TROPICAL OASIS

Situated on a secluded tropical island in the center of the Hawaiian archipelago, the **Four Seasons Sensei Lanai** ([fourseasons.com/sensei](http://fourseasons.com/sensei), from \$1,130 per night) offers an integrated wellness program designed by Dr. David Angus, Sensei's co-founder and accomplished author. The philosophy is centered around three practices — move, nourish and rest — and is designed to help participants develop and maintain a conversation between the body and mind. A five-day itinerary is recommended to get the most out of the experience and includes a wellness consultation upon arrival and a combination of therapeutic spa treatments and one-on-one consultations with practitioners in fitness, nutrition, mindfulness, stress management and yoga. Daily activities also include hikes or nature walks, an on-site 18-hole putting course, and other island activities like snorkeling, horseback riding, scuba diving excursions and more. And if that isn't enough, the rolling hills, tropical greenery and convivial staff are guaranteed to impart the wellness reset you have been craving.

## VIRTUAL WELLNESS

If you are still feeling like it is too soon to venture farther than your own backyard, you aren't alone. And the good news is that you don't need to — especially when some of the most sought-after wellness retreats in the world are offering virtual gatherings. Ibiza-based Kundalini yoga retreat **Soul Adventures** ([souladventures.co.uk](http://souladventures.co.uk)) is run by reiki master, shamanic healer and yogi Trish Whelan. She is offering a 40-Day At-Home Virtual Retreat (\$90) that you can start at any time and finish at your own pace. Sign up and you will also receive lifetime access to meditations, yoga classes and live virtual healing circles. **Oneworld Ayurveda** ([oneworldayurveda.com](http://oneworldayurveda.com)) is a Bali-based retreat created by a team of Ayurvedic doctors, yogis and chefs. The virtual offering includes a seven-day detox (starting at \$95) designed to boost the immune system, improve vitality, remove toxins and teach mindfulness. Attendees will receive access to seven yoga classes, cooking demonstrations and Balinese blessing rituals. And if that wasn't enough, for each program purchased, a donation will be made to provide a local Balinese family with a week's worth of food.

## HEART TO HEART

Kim Peirano, DACM, L.Ac., doctor of acupuncture and founder of San Rafael-based **Lion's Heart Wellness** ([lionsheartwellness.com](http://lionsheartwellness.com)), offers advice on how to be well and stay well, and explains why sickness isn't always a bad thing.

"In my practice, intuitive healing refers to the way I gain insight about my patients and how I come up with treatment plans. I read a lot of evidence-based medical journals and texts, but I also lean heavily on my intuition for how and what to apply to each unique patient. I tune into my intuition by listening to my guidance and reading the energy of the body to know where to place needles or what to say to open up that gateway for healing. The world of alternative healing is vast, and there are tons of different modalities and healers, and even within a modality every practitioner will be very different in their

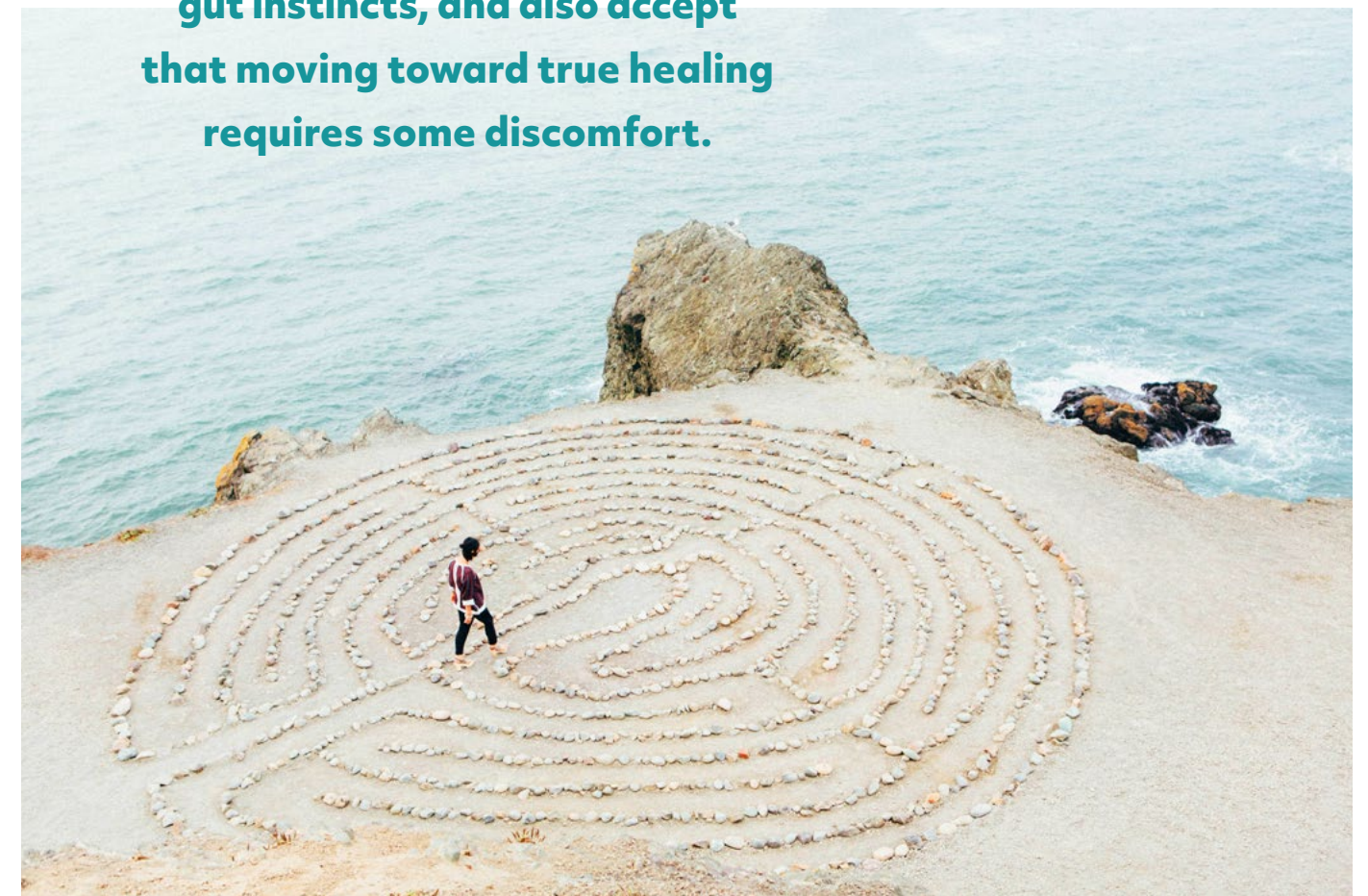
approach and strategy. It's important to listen to your gut instincts, and also accept that moving toward true healing requires some discomfort — maybe it's the pain of an acupuncture needle or the realizations about what needs healing or letting go of. A healing journey isn't always easy, but it is always worthwhile. When things get tough it's important to keep going; you're just around the corner from the real magic.

I use oracle decks associated with healing that help me connect to my guides. Often, I will use these before a patient comes in to help me get a good read on what the overall picture is that they are working through or how to help them. I also ask what I need to know about myself and how I communicate or interact in order to create the best environment for each person. Sometimes the information

might be a clue to something the patient isn't telling me about or it's a general guide to what to address.

Wellness to me is being in alignment with our true intention. Our true intention is our purpose for being here on the earth at this time, and it's different for everyone — it's not usually something we are aware of, but we can sense when we're in alignment or heading down the right path. Wellness is being on that path, and healing is the process of finding it again. We can get off our path in a number of ways, and oftentimes illness or issues in our lives are actually signs to help us steer back; we just need to listen. When we start doing that, we can have a much richer experience in life, learning with our illness and even experiencing wellness while being sick — it doesn't have to be one or the other."

**It's important to listen to your gut instincts, and also accept that moving toward true healing requires some discomfort.**



From top: Aubrie Pick; Robb Gordon, courtesy of the Four Seasons



Yoga instructor and educator Rocky Heron

## GET MOVING

Dedicated yogis all over the Bay Area are itching to get back to their in-studio practices, but as things start to slowly open up again, there is still some understandable anxiety around being in a closed space with others. The next best thing? Outdoor yoga, of course. **NPK Yoga** ([npkyoga.com](http://npkyoga.com)) specializes in socially distanced outdoor yoga paired with hiking (\$20 per class). Class location and dates vary, so check the website, but rotating venues include Baker Beach, Rodeo Beach, Muir Beach and China Camp State Park. Depending on the locale, the 90-minute session includes a round-trip hike followed by an hour of yoga. At others, it entails a hike with a stop at an overlook to practice yoga, and then a hike back to the starting point. Either way, it sounds like an invigorating way to spend a Saturday morning. In San Francisco, **Outdoor Yoga SF** ([outdooryogasf.com](http://outdooryogasf.com)) is run by Julie Aiello, with classes taking place on Baker Beach. There are two types of 75-minute classes (\$25 per class) — power vinyasa and all-levels vinyasa — where participants are given headphones to help them focus while they practice. Don't worry, you can still hear the sound of the waves while you vinyasa. Still feeling like at-home yoga is the safest bet? Switch up your normal yoga practice with internationally acclaimed yogi **Rocky Heron** ([rockyheron.com](http://rockyheron.com)). Born in the Bay Area to a celebrated reggae artist and an alternative-medicine woman, Heron uses an amalgamation of styles and modalities fine-tuned to keep you engaged and coming back for more. His classes are available online at MazeOn Yoga, Glo, YogaGirl and on YouTube (check his website for more class info).

This page: courtesy of Rocky Heron; opposite: courtesy of Methodology



## EAT THIS NOT THAT

How about a show of hands — who is a little tired of cooking three meals a day? Every. Single. Day. Us too. The good news is that warmer summer weather practically begs for a cleanse. And yes, cleansing is a controversial topic, so maybe we'll just call it a super dose of veggies that you don't have to cook and is delivered right to your door. On board? Thought so. And living in Marin, we have some pretty great choices. Local favorite **Urban Remedy's** ([urbanremedy.com](http://urbanremedy.com)) Energizing Cleanse (\$53) is a one-day cleanse consisting of six low-glycemic juices — all organic, gluten-free, dairy-free and non-GMO. The green juices offer that super dose of veggies while the Blue Magic cashew milk is so yummy that even kids can't resist. **Methodology** ([gomethodology.com](http://gomethodology.com)) offers prepared food delivery with rotating menus each week. They can accommodate most diets and you can choose how many meals you want to receive each day and every week. It offers breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks and is adjustable to accommodate your desired caloric intake. Meals include items like Paleo Smoked Salmon Lox & Egg Breakfast Sandwich, Vegan Hawaiian Sticky Hodo Soy Tofu and Paleo Lobster Avocado Toast — clearly above and beyond your average diet plan. **Dee's Organic Catering** ([deesorganic.com](http://deesorganic.com)), founded and run by Delores Coleman, has been providing delicious food to Marinites for more than 15 years, and if you are looking for a home-cooked experience this is your go-to. While Coleman is known for catering larger events like the Mill Valley Film Festival and Marin Art Walk, she can also create specialized menus that fit to any diet and deliver straight to your door (for reoccurring clients she offers reusable containers). Thinking of throwing a dinner party and don't want to cook? Coleman and her team can handle that, too.



Bella Notte's color palette is inspired by the colors of Marin

## SLEEP MATTERS

One simple Google search reveals a bevy of sleep wellness institutions across the country. Someone seeking help for a sleeping disorder or support for building better sleep hygiene isn't surprising — but what is surprising is a recent

study from Sweden's Uppsala University. Researchers there found that young, healthy individuals who lost just one night's sleep dramatically increased the level of tau protein in the blood — an increase that is strongly associated with an elevated risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. We all know sleep is important, but creating a calming sanctuary to allow the body to rest and

repair is essential — and one of the ultimate acts of self-care. A good place to begin? Your bed. And if you are looking for luxurious, nontoxic, locally made linens, Novato-based **Bella Notte** (bellanottelinens.com) is a likely place to start.

"We spend half of our lives in bed, and we're committed to helping our customers create a truly restorative sanctuary," says the company's brand

director, Taylor Batlin. Made without harsh chemicals or toxic dyes, the artisan linens have been created in the Bay Area since 1996. "For Bella Notte, conscious everyday luxury means a commitment to creating fewer, better home textiles that our customers can live in and love for yearshe antithesis of fast fashion," she adds. "Our artisanal dye process starts with hand-mixing our unique color palette and then garment-dyeing each small batch of product to order, using only non-hazardous and nontoxic dyes, as well as hypoallergenic softening agents for you and your family's health."

And it is impossible not to love the peaceful, locally inspired color palette. "Our core offering is inspired by the natural beauty around us, each color offering a sense of calm ... a range of blues and grays in Fog, Sterling, Cloud and Mineral echo where the sky touches the sea along our rugged Marin coastline; Eucalyptus, like the delicate green leaves found in Madrone Canyon; and Pearl and Rouge, elegant blushing pinks inspired by the Cecile Brunner climbing rose in our Mill Valley home. With each core color, we hope to evoke a sense of serenity and tranquility," says Batlin.

Photo by Elizabeth Messina, courtesy of Bella Notte

## STAYING CONNECTED

The shelter-in-place order came as a shock to many of us, at times leading to an unfamiliar feeling of being deprived of social interaction, but thanks to modern technology like FaceTime, Zoom and social apps like Houseparty, the resounding consensus is that it actually brought friends and family together. But what about those we were isolating with? The line between healthy relationships and not-so-healthy relationships was thrust to the forefront — the proof lying in surging divorce rates. On the positive side, there seems to be an uptick in the search for wellness in our personal relationships.

According to a 2019 article by Harvard Women's Health Watch, the absence of meaningful social connections is associated with depression, cognitive decline in later years and an increased mortality rate. One of the studies cited examined data from more than 309,000 people, and found that "a lack of strong relationships increased the risk of premature death from all causes by 50 percent — an effect on mortality risk roughly comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and

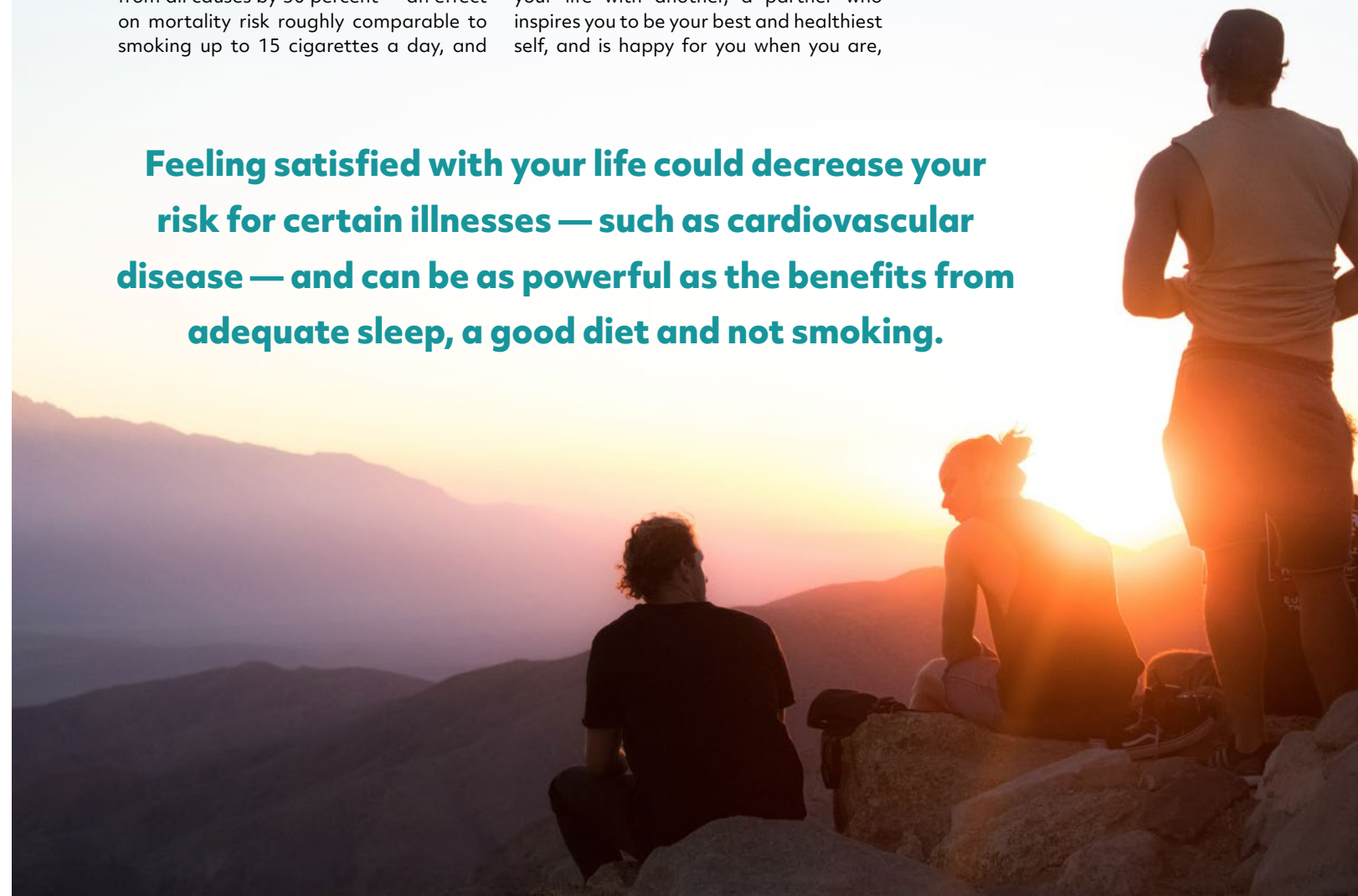
greater than obesity and physical inactivity." Dating expert **Cassie Keim** of Ross' Innovative Match (innovative-match.com) says, "Research has linked psychological well-being to physical well-being. Feeling satisfied with your life could decrease your risk for certain illnesses — such as cardiovascular disease — and can be as powerful as the benefits from adequate sleep, a good diet and not smoking." So what does a healthy romantic relationship entail?

According to Keim, "The hallmark of a healthy relationship is the absence of negativity. Wellness reflects the presence of space — for happiness, health, personal satisfaction and mutual respect." Whether you have just gotten out of a bad relationship, are looking for love or are in a long-term committed relationship, one thing remains constant: "Wellness should be fundamentally intrinsic, meaning you should determine your self-worth using only internal factors, and not external sources," she says. "The ability to share your life with another, a partner who inspires you to be your best and healthiest self, and is happy for you when you are,

can be fulfilling in a way you cannot replicate platonically."

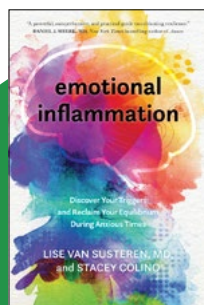
Sure, romantic relationships are important to most of us, but at the end of the day they are not what define who we are, and surrounding ourselves with people who care about us — friends, family, colleagues — has proven just as significant. Keim adds, "It is equally as important for you to have a network of people who know you intimately and would be there for you in your time of need." But that is not the end of the story. "Wellness can improve or worsen at the drop of a hat, so you need to stay on top of it," Keim says. "To do that, the first healthy relationship you need to work at is the one you have with yourself. Communication is essential — make sure the narrative in your head is a positive one. Understanding your needs lays the groundwork for you to understand your partner's, and is the foundation to a strong, healthy relationship."

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## AN OPEN BOOK

Do you feel like you have been living on high alert? You are not alone. The National Institutes of Health define emotional wellness as “the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times.” And if there is one thing we have all become very familiar with lately, it is difficult and stressful times. However, as the world of wellness continues to evolve, experts are developing explanations around ailments we knew existed but didn’t have language for — until now. One such phenomenon, emotional inflammation, is quickly garnering attention. The recently released ***Emotional Inflammation: Discover Your Triggers and Reclaim Your Equilibrium During Anxious Times*** (Sounds True) by Dr. Lise Van Susteren and Stacy Colino is redefining how we view stress and anxiety. Sleep problems, agitation, outrage, hyperactivity, persistent grief, inescapable anxiety about the future — the book teaches us how to evaluate triggers, understand these feelings and listen to what the body is trying to say.



## FABRIC OF OUR LIVES

Back in March when the shelter in place was issued, many textile businesses quickly pivoted and started making masks. One local company, San Rafael-based **Rough Linen** (roughlinen.com), did just that and focused its efforts on keeping health care and law enforcement workers safe. The company prides itself on the products being natural, sustainable, breathable and inherently antimicrobial, and this approach is reflected in everything from face masks to pinafores and aprons, curtains and bath textiles. Founder Tricia Rose says, “Linen has always spelled magic for me, it evokes my grandmother’s house,

and everything that is secure and loving. The wholesome roughness of its unironed texture, its fresh smell, even the weight of it. Humans co-evolved with linen. I love its provenance, its freshness under my hand.” Although linen is the fabric of choice for sunny summer afternoons spent by the sea, it has a long history, getting its start in Europe and dating back some 65,000 years. And unlike linen, Rose says, “the first poly-cotton sheet ever woven is still out there, in landfill or the ocean; that’s a sobering thought.” Linen is a natural fiber, fashioned from the stem of the flax plant, making it 100 percent biodegradable. And compared to cotton, the growing process for flax uses less water, less fertilizer and almost no pesticide — something we can all feel good about.



This page, Liz Daly, courtesy of Rough Linen; opposite, Stephanie Mohan

## PLANT LIFE

**Gathering Thyme** (gatheringthyme.com) is a women-owned herb store and health care clinic in San Rafael. The founders, Cheryl Fromholz, a Western clinical herbalist, and Judy Lieblein (photo inset), shamanic practitioner and reiki master, promote health and well-being through herbs and food as medicine. They offer herbal courses, workshops, events and a marketplace where you can purchase herbs, spices, salves, supplements, mushrooms, teas, essential oils and more. Fromholz offers some insight into herbalism, foraging in Marin and plant-based wellness.

### How is Western herbalism different than other types?

There are many forms of herbalism, each being a unique and ancient practice specific to a region of the world. Ayurveda evolved as the predominant form of herbal healing in India, whereas Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an ancient system of health and wellness that began in China. Unani Tibb is practiced almost



exclusively by the Muslim community in the Middle East and it is thought that this practice has its roots in ancient Greek medicine and the teachings of Hippocrates. There are also many, many other community or culture-specific practices enjoyed by people worldwide, including curanderismo of Latin America and Traditional Native American Herbalism. In the U.S., Western herbal traditions come from both Native American herbalism and from the European colonizers whose medicine was based on the ancient Greeks.

### Why is being an herbalist in Marin so special?

We have an incredible abundance of native medicinal plants that grow in Marin County

and it is one of the reasons I was drawn to live here. We also have some special ecosystems, including the coastal redwood forests and beautiful oak woodlands. I think this is what draws many people to live here and why so many people promote and practice living healthier lives, and this includes using herbs as medicine.

### What are the most beneficial and commonly used medicinal plants in Marin?

We have so many wonderful native plants and wild weeds that find their home in Marin. If I had to focus on native plants, I’d say yerba santa, red root (also known as ceanothus), yarrow, grindelia, elder and the turkey tail mushroom. For the wild weeds, undoubtedly nettle would top the list along with dandelion, plantain, fennel and yellow dock. The use of each plant would take up paragraphs on their own, each having a multitude of applications. You can see I listed just as many wild weeds as native plants — we can’t discount our weed-based wild medicines.

### If someone wanted to dabble in herbalism before signing up for a workshop or course, what would you recommend?

Reading anything by Rosemary Gladstar. Before I started paying for courses and going to herb school, I read every book on herbs I could get my hands on, but it was Rosemary Gladstar’s books that really stood out for me. *Medicinal Herbs, A Beginner’s Guide* or *Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health* are two really good herbal primers. Both are very easy to read, with recipes you can make on your own. I also recommend learningherbs.com, an online site with lots of free information. In my experience, however, nothing beats going to herb school, where you develop deep bonds not just with the plants but with fellow students.