

Goals and Growth

*"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.
Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."*

– Jalaluddin Mevlana Rumi

Goals

I've been setting goals each new year since I can remember. As January gets underway I take them on, tirelessly pouring myself into meeting them by year end. Note the use of the word tireless rather than joyful. If this sounds at all familiar you may want to read on. Turns out there is another way to do this.

While I was well aware of my pattern of driving myself I was not fully aware of how hard I really was on myself in order to meet my goals. Since the goals I set are always just out of my reach I assumed the only way to meet them was to work even harder.

Fortunately for me, and those I live with, I began to experience a great discomfort around this driven, harder working me. To be real honest, I didn't really like her. She got things done alright, but the process was becoming less sustainable. The real problem was that with a lifetime of book writing ahead, my goal was to write more rather than less.

I knew something needed to change and it was most likely me. Interestingly enough, this realization came when I was midway through a Narrative Health Coach program. I enrolled in the program in early 2017 to discover a better way to help clients who were challenged by the lifestyle changes they needed to make in order to restore their health. I selected Narrative Health Coaching above the plethora of coaching programs now available because it focuses on the personal storyline of

individuals and how to shift it.

Growth

While I enrolled to help my clients, the personal awareness I gained was divinely timed. So here I was learning about the power of personal narratives – the story we believe to be true about ourselves – and my own personal narrative began sending off alarm bells. After a point, the bells were so distracting I knew addressing them was my only choice. I decided to engage with the experiential learning style that has served me very well over my lifetime and hire a coach for myself.

I wanted specifically to develop a kinder, gentler approach to my writing goals. While I do very well with organizing time schedules and systems to meet my goals, I was in need of a set of eyes to cast a light into my blind spots. I found exactly that in an Integral Master Coach™, who happened to be a published author as well.

As this year closes, I am wrapping up four months of being coached. I could not be more pleased with the growth experienced and the tools I take away in order to support all future writing intentions. I began my 3rd book last month while I was still meeting with my coach. Confidently, I set off, but after two weeks I crashed, old habits colliding with the newly formed. I was so grateful to have the support I needed in order to take a few steps back, reflect, and try again with greater success.

The Narrative Health Coach training program I am enrolled continues into the first half of 2018. I enter the mentorship stage in January which permits me to soon offer coaching plans for new clients. I am thrilled to be able to provide a bridge for those who, like me in my writing, want deeply to make a change but need new skills and support to do just that. Stay tuned for more information as my plans develop.

Changes

Looking ahead, I embrace the newness and potential of 2018. I bring a new perspective to book writing and enter the final stretch of Narrative Health coursework that will lead to certification by the International Consortium for Health and Wellness Coaching. These two goals along with my teaching schedule led to my making a slight reduction in office hours for clients.

As of January 1st, my practice hours for clients, local and remote will be:

Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday 11-4:30

Now in closing, I suggest you take some quiet time in the days ahead to reflect on your own personal goals for 2018. Consider the story you tell yourself about those goals. Might there be a kinder, gentler approach? Might some growth and support in meeting your goals be in order? If so, consider what that might look like for you and take the steps to see that your needs are met.

Wishing you all a kinder, gentler 2018.

A Solstice Supper

Solstice is just around the corner, and I've put together a lovely spread you want to share with family or friends and mark the return to light in the weeks ahead.

Since this year, the shortest day falls on a Friday it's all the more reason to commemorate the shift in season. The past six months we have been moving towards shorter darker days and

now it's time to bring on the light!

While cozy tealights and a roaring fire are all in order, so is a seasonal meal that is both warming and comforting. Holly, pine and mistletoe all have long been associated with solstice and if available could be added to set the mood.

Join me in welcoming in this change in seasons and enjoy this feast of flavors!

Jamie Oliver's Winter Salad

- $\frac{1}{2}$ a red cabbage
- $\frac{1}{2}$ a white cabbage
- 2 large carrots
- 4 spring onions
- a few shoots from winter cabbages, such as kale or cavolo nero , optional
- 300 ml milk- any plant based milk will do
- 4 anchovies, from sustainable sources- replaced with a heaping spoonful of chickpea miso or other miso paste of your choice
- 6 cloves of garlic
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 handful of mixed seeds, such as poppy, sesame and sunflower
- $\frac{1}{2}$ a bunch of fresh mint

[Full Directions Here](#)

Meera Sodha's Parsnip and Carrot Mulligatawny soup

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

1 large brown onion, peeled and diced

4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

3cm ginger, peeled and grated

1 green finger chilli, very finely chopped

2 carrots (250g), peeled and cut into 1cm cubes

2 parsnips (250g), peeled and cut into 1cm cubes

1 tsp ground cumin

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground coriander

150g red lentils, washed and drained

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ litres vegetable stock

Salt

For the parsnip crisps

1 parsnip

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp rapeseed oil

[Full Directions Here](#)

Susan Power's Cinnamon Ginger Truffles

2 cups almonds, ground fine

1 tablespoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon ginger

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon cloves

1/2 cup agave or liquid sweetener of your choice

1/2 cup dried cranberries

1/2 cup golden raisins

dried coconut

cacao powder

[Full Directions Here](#)

Lauren's Favorites: A Gift Giving Guide

If Oprah can have a "Favorites List" then I guess we should have one too! Over the years I have shared with you my 'must haves' for enjoying the benefits of a plant based diet.

If you have a veggie lover in your life or if you are well on your way to being a veggie lover yourself, here is a gift for you! I have packaged up a little list for your gift giving needs this holiday season.

Enjoy!

Vitamix— Check out why I love it so much!



Pressure Cooker– The WMF Pressure Cooker is my Favorite!



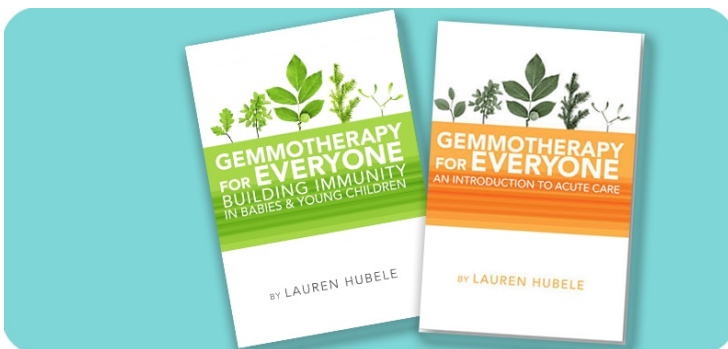
Veggie Bullet– I finally broke down this year and added this handy little tool to my kitchen.



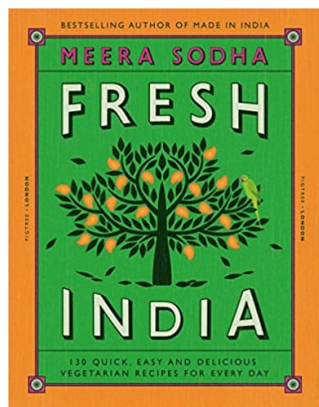
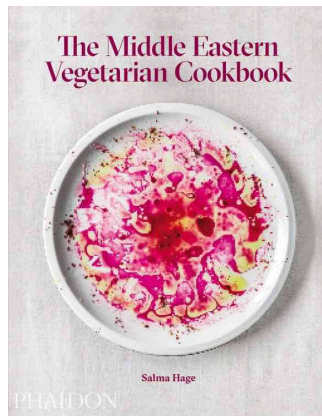
Gemmotherapy Acute Care Kit– Be prepared to support your immune system at all times!



Gemmotherapy Books-Learn how plants build and restore our immunity for healthier bodies!



Cook Books— My three favorite additions to my collection!



Immersion Blender– The quickest way to blend soup-expand your horizons with this handy tool!



Knives and Cutting Board– These basics will keep the chopping, slicing, and dicing quick.



Spiralizer– Add some quick fun and innovation with veggie noodles!



Heroic Pet Efforts: UPDATE!

Update!

I am so thrilled to share that Sweet Grace, as she has been known in our household, has joined a forever family! For three months now Grace has hung out with Lucy our laid back Great Pyr and Ruby the feisty calico. She has made amazing progress in her health and emotional state. I kept her dosed daily with Gemmotherapy. First, we began clearing the toxins she likely

encountered in the flood waters with Walnut extract for a month followed by supporting her aging kidneys with Juniper. Though still a fragile senior dog, her vitality has increased dramatically.

While my initial hope was to reunite Grace with her Houston family, that hope dwindled by the week when my social media efforts were met with no response. Once two months had passed, we made the family decision to begin a search for a permanent home. While we loved Grace, she had a deep fear of men, and I live with two. She also needed a steady routine which our European travels would not support. We all felt she would better settle into a home with more feminine energy and without the constant transition to a housesitter.

A New Home

Grace is now getting exactly what every senior dog needs and deserves, a quiet and easy going household with someone home all day, a backyard to enjoy as she likes, and a very dear tibetan spaniel roommate who is just as happy to leave her be as she is to cozy up for a nap. Grace taught me many lessons in her short stay with the greatest being her perseverance in spite of loss. I can rest assured that her new owner will provide all that she needs and more these final months/years of her life. Most importantly a steady dose of love and care that will continue through the end of her days.

You can read Grace's journey into our home and heart below.

Grace's Story

5 September, 2017

Wherever in the world you may be reading this, you have most certainly been touched emotionally by the horrific unfolding

of news since Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas coast. The enormity of it all continues to be more than overwhelming. So many stories and so much love, all at this critical time when we Americans have been questioning whether or not compassion still existed in our country. Austinites, who remained well out of harm's way, have been granted a tremendous opportunity to give of themselves these past days to make a difference. Austin's Mayor Adler opened the door and heart of our city for incoming evacuees and they have been well received.

Today I want to spotlight the work of one amazing animal rescue organization that will get my donations until the end of my days. Austin Pets Alive! fully staged and staffed an impromptu tent shelter in a Katy, Texas parking lot, 30 minutes from downtown Houston, and began receiving animals early last week. Staff and volunteers from the Austin based program received hundreds of animals by the end of the first day and over the course of five more days rescued over 1700 animals. By Thursday, a call was put out for Austinites to shuttle these Houston area rescues to APA! headquarters downtown if medical care was needed or to a donated warehouse in north Austin where they would be screened and matched with foster homes.

The fact that this whole operation was orchestrated literally overnight and Facebook served as a their means of communicating specific needs was astounding. Shuttles continued into the weekend when I was fortunate enough to make a rescue run with my daughter Meghan.

Not sure of how many or what exactly we'd be transporting back, we filled her SUV with supplies and animal crates and had a bit fun with our imaginations on the two hour trip. Approaching Katy, it wasn't hard to miss APA!'s tent city and we soon found ourselves in line with a fleet of cars, trucks, and vans all up for whatever cargo needed a ride to safety. We inched our way forward over the next hour and watched kennel

after kennel be dispersed by hardworking volunteers. As we pulled forward into position and confirmed our destination was Austin, we were told we'd be transporting just one dog. Yes, just one, but she was in distress and in desperate need of a/c and a peaceful ride to receive medical care. They brought her over in a crate and loaded up one very worried golden hound mix with the saddest eyes I've ever seen. Needless to say, over the next two hours she stole our hearts and by the time Austin's skyline was in view we knew she'd eventually be coming home with me.

When we approached the APA! headquarters, we joined in another long queue of cars being sorted according to needs by the young volunteers. We were directed to the building that was housing pets needing medical care. If I wasn't already impressed with APA!, what we observed next was astounding. After some communications between volunteers, a vet tech and assistant came right out to us. Due to the heat, overcrowding in the buildings, and condition of our sweet rescue, they agreed to do all they needed from the air conditioned comfort of Meghan's car. And so, for the next 45 minutes, they went through their tests and checks allowing, who we would soon call Grace, to stay put and as relaxed as possible. Three things were determined: she was old, exhausted, and had infected ears. Other than that, all our gal needed was a bath, dinner, some peace and quiet, and love. That was exactly what Grace received, in addition to some Gemmotherapy and a Homeopathic remedy for trauma.

After 48 hours, I can safely say the only condition this ol' gal is suffering from is heartbreak and I can't even begin to imagine the story she could tell. However, this morning, for the first time since meeting Grace, the rescue hound from Houston greeted me with what I know now as her "happiness bay" and a wagging tail. For now, she's got a safe place to be until APA!'s reuniting efforts are in full force and maybe, just maybe we can find the someone on the other side of her

heartache.

APA!'s work is still going strong as they shift support to include Beaumont, TX. This organization is doing an incredible job of helping pets find their way to safety and into foster homes with the aid of like minded rescue groups from across the country. If you'd like to help their work today, I know they would appreciate whatever amount you can give.

"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us."

~Anne Lamott

Living Creatively: Trust II

The subject of trust is an important one when it comes to creative living. Here's the conclusion to the post I began last week.

Last spring, as I entered the final stretch of writing, Building Immunity in Babies and Children, I clearly remember a long string of weekends full of suffering. All the signs of spring teased me through the windows of my office. I would day dream of the simple pleasure of spending hours after my morning swim at Barton Springs soaking up the quiet or sitting at sunset watching the egrets fish for their evening meal at the lower falls of McKinney State Park. Instead, the task driver in me had set a deadline. A deadline meant no

languishing about.

Suffering

While a daily dose of nature was in the schedule, it was time blocked without a bit of slack. I had a job to finish and that required my focus on my laptop as I attempted to knit together, with some clarity, strands of key points needing to be expressed. I had made the decision, based on advice from my advance readers, to blend what were 5 chapters on chronic symptoms into one smooth read. For some reason I was finding the task excruciating. I was ready to be done. I was so ready, that I told everyone who would listen. This went on until finally my gentle, tolerant husband sat me down and said these important words,

“Listen to me, this has never been about being done. For you, this project has been about helping parents. If you quit before you find the clearest way to communicate your message, all of the time you have put into this will be without meaning.”

His words hit hard and were absolutely sobering. They were powerful and clear enough to shift my focus. They helped me realize I had lost two essential elements in the process that could bring joy:

1. Purpose
2. The craft of writing

I had chosen instead to create a story line for myself of the suffering writer and clung to it with all my might. With this change in perspective, I no longer was working to finish but working to be clear, and that is exactly when the joy returned to my writing. My purpose returned when I could visualize an actual parent from my practice sitting right in the room with me asking for clarification as I explained a particular topic.

Finding Joy

In my desire to rework passages in order to bring a greater clarity, I remembered the love I have for connecting words in a way that leaves no doubt in their message. I began to trust in the pure pleasure it delivered and let it serve as my barometer. When it slipped from my sight I knew I needed to adjust course.

As I embark on a third book, this post serves as a deep personal reminder for me to set the right intention from the start. I'll happily commit right now to place my trust in the joy of the process. In order to stay true to that, I'm starting off by inviting a few important folks into the party with me because it's more difficult to wallow in misery while there's company looking on. I'll soon meet with a few of my trusted colleagues to serve as my brain trust, to challenge the expression of my ideas. Since I will share a bit of my personal story this time, I've asked a dear friend who I've known since we were 11, to keep me accountable for showing up authentically and completely. I'm so excited I honestly can hardly wait! Who knows, I may fall so in love with the process that I won't want this next endeavor to end.

"Trust opens up new and unimagined possibilities."

~Robert C. Solomon~

It's been my pleasure sharing this series on Creative Living, inspired by Elizabeth Gilbert's most recent book, Big Magic. If you are just joining in you certainly won't want to miss all of the other posts! Start out here with my post on Courage.