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Avocado chocolate mousse

## Food Matters

by Evie Fairley

If you dream of avocados it may represent good health and longevity, or that you have sex or marriage lurking in your subconscious, or perhaps it is a symbol for lovers, the fruit growing in pairs representing each person in the couple, living and growing together for as long as the tree grows.

Could you dream up a more spectacular, creamy, delicious and versatile fruit? Nutritionally they are high

in potassium, magnesium, oleic acid and fibre while low in carbohydrates. The fat in avocados can help absorb fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K which they are amply abundant in, as well as antioxidants and carotenoids.

So not only is avocado highly nutritious in itself but it can increase the uptake of nutrients from other plant foods

Since our local avocado season has been so abundant, the recipes this month feature this wonderful fruit.

### Vegan avocado chocolate mousse

(for breakfast all the way through to dessert)  
 1/4 cup (60ml) maple syrup  
 1/4 cup (60ml) coconut cream  
 1/2 cup (88gms) vegan dark chocolate  
 3/4 cup (63gms) cacao powder  
 1 tsp vanilla  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 2 medium ripe avocados (370 gms approx)

Add maple syrup, coconut cream, melted chocolate, cacao, vanilla and salt in a food processor, then add avocado and blend until creamy and smooth

Transfer to four serving glasses; top with grated vegan dark chocolate and refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

### Baked vegan avocado fries

Avocados – ripe but firm so they don't fall apart  
 Flour – any flour including gluten-free such as brown rice flour or besan  
 Panko Japanese breadcrumbs or make your own (coarse in texture)  
 Salt

Spices such as oregano, garlic powder and chilli powder  
 Lime juice and olive oil

Lightly coat the avocado slices in flour and spices, dip the slices in oil and lime juice, coat the slices in Panko or homemade breadcrumbs and bake for 15 minutes at 200°C and serve.

### Vegan chilled avocado cucumber soup

(great for cooling down and rehydrating on a hot day)  
 A handful of baby spinach  
 1/2 avocado  
 1 scallion (spring onion) roughly chopped  
 1 tbs white miso  
 5-10 basil leaves  
 1 peeled Lebanese cucumber  
 1 tbs lime juice  
 1/2 tsp tamari or coconut aminos  
 1 tbs tahini  
 1 tsp maple syrup  
 1/4 tsp salt  
 Pinch white pepper  
 Pinch ground ginger

Add all ingredients to blender and blend until smooth. Garnish with fresh basil leaves and a slice of lime.

## WILD NOSH, NORTHERN RIVERS STYLE

by Thom Culpepper

Fresh water crustaceans are coming into their own. The yabbie, or as some would call them, the river crays are appearing on more and more restaurant menus due to the propagation of some forms by freshwater hatcheries. There are many to be had from Australian rivers and dams.

The citizens of the land have long enjoyed this dry-land fare for generations, munching through buckets of them when opportunity offers the beasts as an alternative from the "flesh and three veg" regime.

The Northern Rivers offer up a number of species of the yabbie family, the most common being the formally named *cherax destructor*. This survivor from the Jurassic period is aptly named, having a pair of nippers that constitute nearly half its bodyweight. A fiercer-looking beast is hard to imagine.

Though generally found throughout the continent, they have populated most of Australia's river systems, associated irrigation canals, and dams. Victoria and Tasmania in particular turn out some real monsters, some weighing in at two to three kilos.

NB: Secure gloving is imperative when handling these larger forms.

The NSW Dept of Ag has a comprehensive culture note on the *cherax destructor*.

Should you have a farm dam, raising yabbies is worth considering. They are prolific breeders and tough survivors, foraging on a broad range of foodstuffs. They clean the bottom of dams of most detritus, plant material and remnant biology. They are virtually drought-proof as they can burrow down as deep as two metres when the land allows. Light dam walls can suffer undermining damage due to this ability.

They can also be raised in an aquarium system, requiring support with foods such as layer or rabbit pellets.

Due to an interesting set of genes, they can be encouraged through selection,



to express a wide range of colours, the 'electric blue' being the most spectacular, the 'red claw', *cherax quacricarinatus* of Queensland and the Northern Territory being a coloured example, the 'marron' or 'koonac', *cherax preissii* of Western Australia, another.

Catching the yabbie will involve trapping them. There are a number of types of yabbie traps available, and most involve erecting them, as they are collapsible. eBay has many on offer, as the American crawfish industry is very large and their trap designs are suitable. You can carry a number of them for baiting and setting. (Buy them from China, the postage is much cheaper.)

You can purchase yabbies from breeders, one such is found at Narrabri NSW, who supply restaurants with the food form, the fishing industry as bait and the coloured examples for aquariums. There are small breeders found on Guntree, particularly for the 'electric blue' aquarium form.

Narcotise the live catch by immersing them in soda-water for an hour or so, steam or par-boil the catch in lightly salted water, or 'toss-fry' them lightly in oil of choice, then add them to the desired paella recipe. The larger form, over 200mm, allows for obtaining some claw meat. It's not worth the bother in the smaller forms; in both cases

though the de-shelled, tail-meat is what is utilised. Grilling the split yabbie is another method of cooking.

### Yabbie paella

450 gms of paella rice  
 10 medium yabbies or 4 large ones  
 200 gms of mussels or vongoli (small clams) or freshwater mussels if you can find them  
 200 gms of fresh peeled green prawns  
 1.5 litres of fish stock  
 3 medium cloves of crushed garlic  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 100 gms of frozen peas or broad beans  
 2 large tomatoes or a 400 gm tin of diced tomatoes  
 8 tablespoons of 'strong' olive oil  
 2 bay leaves  
 15 gms of basil  
 1/4 teaspoon of thyme  
 3 strands of saffron  
 Pepper and salt to taste

### Method

In a deep frying pan or a tagine, poach the onions and garlic until translucent in half the oil.

Poach the yabbies until pink, just heat them through. Put aside.

To make the sofrito, combine all the herbs, tomatoes, plus poached onions and blend together, add the rice and the yabbies on the top of the rice spice blend, add the fish stock and the balance of the oil, bring to the boil and reduce heat to simmer for 10 minutes or so, or until the rice is coloured and is 'al dente'.

Add the mussels or clams, add the peas and cook for a further five minutes. The clams or mussels will have opened, the prawns and yabbies will have been cooked by now.

Serve with a crusty dipping bread and a cover of chopped parsley.

Accompany the paella with a Japanese wakami salad, adding a 'sea-taste' to the land crustaceans. Some fishos and fishing co-ops now offer fresh wakame seaweed from Tasmania, otherwise the local Eastern food supplier will have desiccated wakame.

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# Cognitive bias

This time last year I wrote about the virus of love and fear. But it is clear that it is not the virus that brings this dichotomy, but from that which is within ourselves.

So many opportunities to divide or abide our community and our relationships are being given at this time, so let us make our choices consciously. Be aware that the human mind is subject to 'negative cognitive bias'; that is, we are hard-wired to remember and respond to fear the most.

This has kept our forager species alive, as the gene carriers of our past were more likely to survive if always on the look out for danger, but we need to bring awareness to our own default reasoning if this is having a detrimental impact on our tribe.

If it is the automatic response of the mind to go to the worse case scenario, we don't respond to what happens, we respond to our perception of what happens. Most of us don't respond to the present moment, we are responding to what happened in our past, and usually our assessment of the world is based on early childhood negative experience and paternal/community bias.

Differences in negativity bias have even been linked to political ideology. Some research suggests that conservatives may have stronger psychological responses to negative information than liberals. For example, people who consider themselves politically conservative are more likely to rate ambiguous stimuli or uncertainty as threatening.

What was I scared of and what was my family/ community scared of? How do I act to assure myself security? These are important questions to ask ourselves, as they may be running your life and your decisions, and we all try to navigate ourselves away from whatever we perceive to be our biggest threat.

We are being asked to mentally weigh up the information presented to us in every aspect of our lives, in an attempt to separate fact from perception. We are time poor and by cognitive design, it is not an easy task, so remember that every one is making their own individual risk/ benefit analysis depending on what they fear and what they value the most.

What right do we have to judge others for their choices if we are not standing in their shoes or understanding their cues? Practising this questioning may lead to intellectual humility, which is the capacity to acknowledge what we don't know. As we grow we may



**In the moment**  
by Dr Jacqueline Boustany

even be able to adopt many perspectives and develop the ability to find compromise.

"Together, these traits are believed to capture the general concept of wisdom that has been promoted by philosophers throughout the ages." – *New Scientist*.

I am almost certain that the way we make our decisions and the emotions attached is even more important than the decision itself, and carries over into how we handle that decision. If we go into a decision with strong conviction, I feel this strengthens our physical chi to handle the consequence.

There are things we can know and things we can never know, so decisions are best not made in the mind, but in the body, in the the gut feeling that carries through our conviction and our sense of Interoception; the hidden sense that shapes well-being.

Stay connected to your inner core sense and fill up your chi with good food, strengthening exercise, and mindfulness meditation.

In the channelled words of Metatron, "Each of you can and must channel your higher selves. Study, look, listen, discern, review and only accept what resonates within." Once the decision is made, take courage and be kind. If you don't want negative energy to impact you, stop resisting it. We are all making a choice about what we want to be anxious about but ongoing anxiety drains our reserves, adds oxidative stress, and weakens our immune system, leaving us more susceptible to illness.

In the illustrious words of the *Barefoot Doctors Handbook for the Urban Warrior*, "This game is fully interactive. Warrior or worrier, you choose." In our Yin/Yang Universe, the positive contains the negative and the negative contains the positive, so all that is left in the end is how we hold ourselves in the midst.

According to the Buddha, "It is with our thoughts that we create the world."

"True character surely is best shown in hell, where true goodness must be best displayed in an underworld where the very opposite is the norm, when evil is living and goodness is an indulgence." – Trent Dalton, *Boy Swallows Universe*

# Conspiracy theorists and the law

Here's a text from a friend, "Hi, are you interested in mounting a case against Covid mandates?" It's not the first I've had on these lines. Fortunately, not my area of law. Can I recommend someone?

Coincidentally, the night before, relaxing with a glass of red and the ABC news, there was the face of my first boss, full-screen, and his voice, enough in itself to trigger the old PTSD, then I heard him say, "I'm not an anti-vaxxer but..."

The legal profession, like the rest of this society, is afflicted with ageism. Admitted at 56, it was a full year, applying for everything on SEEK, before I had a response. On a phone call, I was employed. \$25,000 a year wasn't enough to live on in Sydney in 2005, but he promised a review in three months. Sure.

The office was on the Hume Highway in Liverpool. I rented a house nearby and walked to work. Half of my files were in debt collection. I drafted statements of claim in the local court, attended

Registrar's mediations, and got to know, however briefly, the alleged debtors, invariably lovely people who'd refused to pay our fees.

My supervising solicitor hadn't been to university. He'd learnt his law the old apprenticeship way, and told me once that his employer looked a bit like me, Anglo. I suspect they didn't get on. My trouble is that I'm too conscientious as an employee, doing what I'm told and never complaining.

After a few weeks I noticed that during the morning walk to the office my mouth would be unusually dry, every weekday morning. I wasn't a smoker. Maybe pollution from living and working on an eight-lane highway? Sign or symptom of an undiagnosed disease? But it was only until I got to work and had coffee.

Illumination arrived when he called me into the office, and I tried to speak and couldn't. When your mouth's that dry, you can't.

The answer was clear; a state of terror. Two years later, still no review, still on



by John Adams

\$12/hr, I escaped, but that's another story.

Now I google his name and 'Covid'. There's a Facebook page, with a video. He's running a class action, all the way to the High Court. He didn't have a beard back then.

I'm transported to his office 16 years ago, me standing there, him shouting. Now he's telling me to send him money.

I watch it a few times for psychotherapeutic purposes and ponder the legal possibilities. Not great, as far as I can see.

Another friend sends me a

video of a young man in army uniform, with mad eyes, talking at the camera for an hour and a half, reading from copious notes. Half an hour is enough. At one point he quotes what promises to be an actual source, "This is from," he says (turning pages off-camera), "The Law Dictionary." I wonder which one.

I check the site, BitChute, then Wikipedia: "...known for hosting right wing conspiracy theorists and propagating hate speech".

I don't know why it's called 'conspiracy theory'. Big conspiracies can't work in this reality. Even with small ones, like a conspiracy to import, someone's bound to say something.

The 'theorists' themselves are easy to spot; they use the same pseudo-legal verbiage to propagate the same bullshit. And you can't argue with them. It's like trying to persuade a paranoid schizophrenic that you're their friend. Best, as with narcissists, just block them.

So it's with relief, perhaps tinged with schadenfreude, that I refer them on to the gentleman in Liverpool.

# Boneset: A forgotten but important herb

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) like many other traditional medicinal herbs, has fallen out of favour in popular herbal medicine in Australia. As with most things, there are 'fashions' in herbal medicine.

I have had a resurgence of interest in it as I see it being a very relevant medicinal herb. It is native to North America, and much valued by North American Indians.

As the name implies, it is used (amongst other purposes) to repair bones. As pointed out by herbalist Matthew Wood in his book *The Earthwise Herbal Volume 11*, most of the literature specify it is used for "fever with pain in the bones". It is also known by common names agueweed and feverwort.

There are claims that it was never used for bone setting. However, Matthew Wood while teaching at White Earth Reservation in Minnesota was told by Indigenous elders that it was indeed traditionally used to repair bones. It is especially valuable with broken bones because it helps to bring the bones together in the right place and then set them 'from the inside out'.

I thought this was a remarkable claim (how does the plant know which is the right way to align the bone?) but apparently when bones are broken they secrete substances that help bring the broken ends together



correctly. It is believed that boneset stimulates this process. So the body chemistry and the plants are both very clever.

More well-known in Western herbal medicine is the role of boneset in treating fevers, particularly those of a severe nature. It was valuable in treating influenza, especially where with chills, fever and aching bones. It was also used for the post-infection fatigue from prolonged illnesses. In the early days of European settlement in the US, the colonisers adopted boneset to treat malaria, yellow fever, dengue fever, arthritis, rheumatism, gout, and influenza.

It was used by physicians during the 1918-1919 influenza epidemic and was

found to be one of the safest and most effective medicines. It was combined with other herbs such as red root, black cohosh, gelsemium or lobelia. Significant reductions in death rates were reported. (Some of these herbs are not legal to prescribe here).

Boneset is particularly valuable with infection in the lungs, especially where mucus is stuck and difficult to expel, as often happens in older debilitated patients. It can also be used, however, at the early stages of a virus before the fever and bone aching stage. Matthew Wood describes it as "there is achiness but the chills are not marked and it is difficult to tell whether something is coming on, or one is really sick". Using boneset at this stage draws the fever to a head and flushes it out of the body.

This particular property seems relevant for the side effects from the current Covid-19 vaccination drive. I had experience of using it in this way with my husband Simon (with his permission to use him as a case study). The evening after his vaccine he was feeling unwell, but not severely so. I offered him a dose of boneset tincture in hot water. After a couple of hours he looked quite flushed (as Matthew Wood described, it "draws the fever to a head"). I suggested a further dose in a cup of tea. By bedtime he reported he felt a lot better, and was fully recovered the next day.



**Nature's pharmacy**  
by Trish Clough, herbalist

The traditional use of herbs known as febrifuges (I get blank looks when I use that term – it means medicines that bring down a fever) is to make a tea from the dried herb. Drinking it warm is important.

Because boneset isn't readily available as a dried herb in Australia, I use the tincture instead and simply add it to warm water. It can be used with any viral illness as an adjunct to other herbal treatment.

*Trish Clough is a Lismore herbalist who has been practising for more than 30 years. She conducts her own clinic practice in Club Lane in Lismore.*

*Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452 219 502 or email: trishclough@internode.net.au*

*The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.*



# Birth is a curse

## Tarot Musings

by Grant Walker  
and Amy B

The secretive High Priestess offered us an invitation to initiation; challenging the reader to unlock the mysteries of our world.

The Magician reminded us that the four elements of earth are the lifeblood to personal salvation.

And now The Empress under the subtle shadow of the planet Venus will combine all the elements of both The High Priestess and The Magician in the ultimate creative alchemy. Enlightenment in this world is often a humbling experience; we must be willing to expose our true and authentic self in order to receive the gift of personal salvation.

A mother does not have this choice, the very act of childbirth is without a doubt the truest form of exposure, often saddled with feelings of impending terror, pain and exhaustion. The mother of a child is gifted not only with a new daughter or son, but also her own salvation by way of default.

The growth of the child within raises an awareness of power; that power is realised upon the delivery of the child from the gates contained within her own body.

With the crowning of the child; the woman in turn receives her own; the Mother is initiated as a god, for those that create life are indeed gods, but with this responsibility comes the difficult truth; within the mortal realm she has indeed also ultimately created a certain death.

Perhaps the most sobering paradox of our earthly experience is that in creating life, the mother and father have also created an extinguishable soul.

Just as Persephone was plucked out of the sanctuary of the heavens for the simple act of tasting the mystical pomegranate, so is a child's consciousness; savagely birthed from the mother's ethereal womb and involuntarily forced through the divine gates into the cold harsh reality of the mortal plane.

"Okay, I know what you're thinking. Birth is a curse, and life is a prison. But don't think about that. Don't be sad you guys. Focus on something good." – Michael (Ted Danson), *The Good Place*.

Just as Ted Danson's character stormed the stage



with his gritty yet insightful words describing the earthly experience, fortunately for us we have our feminine planetary twin, Venus, entering our orbit to show us the way here on earth; and if we accept, the true meaning of our existence.

"To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering." – Friedrich Nietzsche

The Empress, represented by Venus, reminds us to seek sanctuary in all the beauty of the world while our plans come to fruition.

Venus, also known as Lucifer or light bringer, dazzles us with her beauty as the morning and evening star, she is bright enough to cast a shadow upon us, she is perhaps the most influential planet within our solar system.

She represents fertility, love, desire, beauty and sex. In Greece she is the goddess Aphrodite; she is found in every mythological record from around the world and is even mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible.

The royal battle between our pomegranate goddess Persephone and Aphrodite over the male mortal beauty Adonis need be the only clue to determine the importance of both the beauty of man on earth and the astonishing cycle of the world in which we suffer.

The mere mortal caused such a dilemma in the heavens that it took the omnipotent Zeus to determine his shared custody.

Yet what is even more astonishing is the fact that it is Adonis' blood that is said to feed and form the mythical pomegranate tree, a tree which symbolises life in its seeds and death in its boughs; yet salvation for us all.

Grant Walker (author)  
and Amy B (illustrator) are  
the creators of the Seeds of  
Initiation tarot deck and book.  
See: [www.seedsofinitiation.com](http://www.seedsofinitiation.com)

# We are all interconnected

by Donna Conolly

We are all interconnected. Sacred, unique and powerful.

We have chosen to be on Earth at this incredible time. From the birds and the bees to the flowers and the trees, and the aquatic souls too.

Whether we like it or not, each being on the planet is connected to us, is a part of us, in an amazing intricate living breathing organism and ecosystem. Each one relying on the other for survival.

The only difference being, we have choices to make that will have a huge impact for all the other lifeforms that inhabit our planet. Awareness reminds us that all choices come with consequences.

We are the guardians and ambassadors that have a huge opportunity to make positive changes moving forward.

The world would be a better place if we worked from a place of respect and understanding for our fellow beings. After all, we are all from the same source energy.

If we were taught to fully comprehend our interdependence in a complex, multidimensional, ecological web, what would we change and what could we become?

What would our society be like if we could transform our prevailing narrative that seems to be based on separation, ego, division, the concept of right / wrong and domination through fear, into one based on recognizing our inter-relatedness, and how that reflects back to our own happiness, wellbeing, abilities to adapt and to thrive?

What would a flourishing planet look like? If we brought together thoughts, feeling, mind, matter, protection, empathy, reason and intuition, what kind of cultures could we build going forward?

If we were taught to fully apprehend our interdependence in a complex, multidimensional, ecological web, what might we change and what could we become?

How would our focus change? Would we then develop a new narrative that considered all life valuable and recognized that we live in communities of all kinds, within deeply-connected living systems and networks that, in respecting and valuing them, could



result in greater levels of wellbeing within those living systems?

Could we grow into creating, acting and participating in a more conscious, collaborative manner that respects diversity in a more sacred worldview?

Merriam-Webster dictionary has a few definitions of 'sacred', including:

a: entitled to reverence and respect  
b: highly valued and important

How might you contribute to establishing that? How might you facilitate such a new, life-revering narrative?

What would you change? What can you change?

What kinds of detoxing, healing, re-patterning, creating would need to take shape in your life so you could participate in coexistence on a global scale?

What long-dormant gifts and talents would you need to retrieve, own, embody and action?

One of the common narratives that seems to demonstrate our "us and them" mentality, with a hefty dose of superiority complex is: "They have no road sense!"

Usually uttered about dogs, but I've heard it applied to multiple animals, including natives.

First of all let's take a step back, and accept some responsibility and accountability.

We (the humans) built these roads through their habitats and homelands. We are the only creature that drive these massive metal machines on said roads.

Then maybe, it is up to us to develop some animal sense, some ethical Earth sense, remember our sacredness?

Time is short. Let's make decisions and choices that our future selves and mother Gaia can be proud of. Let's put the planet's and animals' well-being in the forefront of our minds.

We are being given a huge opportunity to take a step back, breathe and readily envision our new world.

Let's rise above the divisionary energy and the need to be right or wrong! Allow people the space to make the best decisions for themselves using their intuition and knowing. Rather than the current toxic media environment. Inform yourself from your heartspace, not the social media "gurus".

Keep our eyes peeled and hearts opened, so we don't add to the unnecessary damage and drama, as the animals are also here to assist and guide us to the new way of being.

Take a deep breath (take a few). We've got this!

You can connect with Donna for animal communication and healing sessions at: [www.rivergem.com.au](http://www.rivergem.com.au)

# Your vote can give voice to animals

by Anika Mannan

The Animal Justice Party is one of the fastest growing voices in politics. Established in 2009, the party now has three MPs in state parliament.

The MPs are a voice for animals at state level, with recent wins including harsher penalties for animal cruelty and the recognition that household animals can be victims of domestic violence.

Outside parliament, there are 12 regional groups active across NSW, organising at a local level all year round. Recent wins include six councils banning the sale of fur on Council land and four active campaigns against the use of lethal shark nets.

Across the country, many people who've never been active in politics before are joining the Animal Justice Party. The Lismore Regional Group has around 50 members, and there are nearly 3000 members across NSW.

I asked some questions of the Animal Justice Party candidate for Lismore City Council, Alison Waters.



Candidate for  
Lismore City Council,  
Alison Waters.

What's the most inspiring aspect of standing for election?

People here are very community-minded and engaged – if there's a need to come out and protest, people will do that. They will stand up for their community, for their environment, for what makes this area unique and special. Lismore is the birthplace of my mother and my children, and I care deeply about this place.

The most challenging issue we're facing?

One of the most precious aspects of this area is that we have an urban population of koalas. We are really fortunate to share our environment and our home with them, and I know that we want to protect them. I hope that I

can encourage more people to think of themselves as protectors and guardians of our local koala populations, because koalas are very much members of our community.

We also know that we have a housing crisis here. I've been a social worker for 20 years. I work every day in the community, and I know firsthand that a lot of people are struggling – struggling financially, facing social isolation and geographic isolation.

This housing crisis doesn't only affect humans – there are a lot of homeless animals in our area at the moment, and they are victims of the housing crisis, too. People are struggling to find affordable housing, let alone housing that permits them to bring their companion animals.

The need to build more affordable housing is then a key issue affecting both people and animals in Lismore, and I believe we can be ambitious and rise to this challenge in a way that balances with our obligation and responsibility to protect the habitat of the koalas we share our community with.



# How ticks affect horses

by Les Rees

A few people have been concerned about ticks recently and, as I've been finding a few ticks on our horses for a week or so, I thought that was an opportune moment to remind everyone to check their animals regularly from here on and throughout the tick season.

The life cycle of the paralysis tick consists of four stages consisting of the egg, larva, nymph and the adult. The last three stages require the blood from three separate hosts and all three stages can be harmful to our animals.

A lot of people seem unaware that the black peppercorn-sized ticks they are finding on their dogs and cats at the moment are not grass ticks. According to veterinary information, they are paralysis ticks, in the nymph stage of their life cycle.

Ticks lay up to 3,000 eggs and then when the larvae have hatched, they climb up onto nearby plants ready to drop onto their first hosts. After engorging their blood, they fall to the ground, moult and develop into the nymph stage.

They then repeat stage one, climbing onto the nearby vegetation and finding a second host, engorging



another fill of blood, and after moulting become adult ticks.

After getting her fill of blood, the female tick can become more than 100 times her original weight when she drops off her host and lays her eggs, beginning the whole process again.

When you look at the amount of eggs laid by each individual female tick, it is hardly surprising that their density of numbers can be so high and the consequences of their bites can be devastating for our animals.

The saliva of a paralysis tick contains a particularly nasty toxin which is both neurotoxic and cardiotoxic, meaning that it affects the nervous system and heart muscle and can paralyse and kill our animals. They can be found around bushy vegetation and paddocks that

are used as wildlife corridors in areas where there's shelter from direct sunlight. When they need to feed, they climb the taller plants and structures and drop down onto passing animals.

They stay attached whilst engorging blood from their hosts for one to seven days, during which the toxin spreads, with clinical signs appearing around the third day, and toxicity peaking around the fifth day.

The symptoms of tick toxicity include lethargy, falling or lying down, off feed, peripheral nerve dysfunction, lameness, wobbliness in the hind legs or all the legs, reduced muscle tone, difficulty eating, impaired respiratory function, heart and muscle dysfunction, debility and sweating.

If any of these symptoms

are present, you need to act immediately. If you find ticks, remove them and keep the horse in a cool stable away from direct sunlight since the toxins are more readily spread around the body during movement and hot weather.

It's important to do a daily search for ticks, which are found mostly on the upper body, around the head including the lips, chin, around the eyes and ears, back of the head, neck, in between and around the front and back legs. Just feel around for a lump and if it's a tick, remove it carefully so that the head is extracted along with the body.

Some people turn the tick around 180 degrees to ensure the entire tick is removed. There are several methods, but I've read that veterinary advice is not to use topical sprays because they tend to promote further production of toxins when the tick is dying!

We tend to keep our horses away from bushy areas and keep the paddocks mown throughout the growing season to lessen tick burdens. We also use pyrethrum-based sprays on our horses which helps to keep the ticks from biting them, so have very few problems with ticks.

[www.horsetailherbs.com.au](http://www.horsetailherbs.com.au)



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## Groundwork with horses

by Suzy Maloney

Time spent on the ground with our horses has enormous benefits.

It enhances our relationship with our horse, helping us understand and trust each other more. It prepares your horse for riding. We can teach skills horses require from the ground, so when we ask for the same thing from their back, they understand and are confident in their responses.

Groundwork can be used to exercise and athleticise horses by asking them to use their bodies in a variety of ways. This develops the horse's proprioception and self-awareness, helping them to be sure-footed under saddle.

There are many types of groundwork, yields, circles, walking, liberty, stretches and even meditation. I'll briefly touch on each of these and explore the benefits.

**Yields** – are fantastic to create suppleness through your horse's body. They help the horse learn to respond to the lightest pressure and follow subtle cues. The horse learns to move each part of their body separately in all directions, a great skill to have under saddle. Yields can also be used to accustom a horse to a new piece of equipment, such as a bitless bridle.

**Circles** – are fantastic for creating connection. Done correctly, there is an enormous amount of body language conversation between horse and handler. The subtleties of communication create a deep bond and allow for a deeper understanding of each other. Circles are also used for exercise and to develop steady gaits.



Care must be taken not to do mindless circles; the communication needs to be always present. And circles can be used to create Join-Up, a meeting of human and horse in harmony.

**Walking** – many people will take a dog walking, but don't think of doing this with their horse. They love it as much as the dogs. It becomes a fun time that you share with your horse. It prepares your horse for where you will be riding them, removing newness and potential fear. When you take your horse for a walk you have eye contact with them, it's very different to riding. When walking, if something scares your horse, they will look to you for support and help. This deepens their view of you as someone they can trust and who they will be safe with.

**Liberty** – is a fantastic way to develop relationship and connection with your horse. Without any ropes the communication through body language reaches a whole new level. The horse has a chance to express who they are and how they really feel. To be with your horse without gear increases trust, communication, and connection.

**Stretches and massage** – have huge benefits. The horse learns to relax, to give various parts of their body and trust you. Touching and moving your horse's body using your hands creates an intimate closeness. Stretching legs requires the horse to let go and soften. A supple, trusting horse is a happy horse and these develop that suppleness. They also help you identify changes in your horse's body, so you are more aware of potential injuries or problems.

**Meditation** – horses live in the present moment more than us. If we meditate when we are with our horses, they absolutely love it. If I sit in the garden and meditate, I'll usually have a cat or dog come and sit on me, they feel the energy of being present. Meditating in the paddock with your horses can create a magical connection. They will sometimes go to sleep or lay kisses on your cheek. Even short moments of doing this will deepen your relationship with your horse.

With so many wonderful ways to interact with your horse from the ground, it's surprising how it's only in recent years that it has become popular. When I was a child growing up, I never did any of it, I just rode, that was how things were then. The new way of being with horses is better for both human and horse, it's great to see the evolution of the relationship between these two species.

Enjoy your groundwork, Happy Horising.

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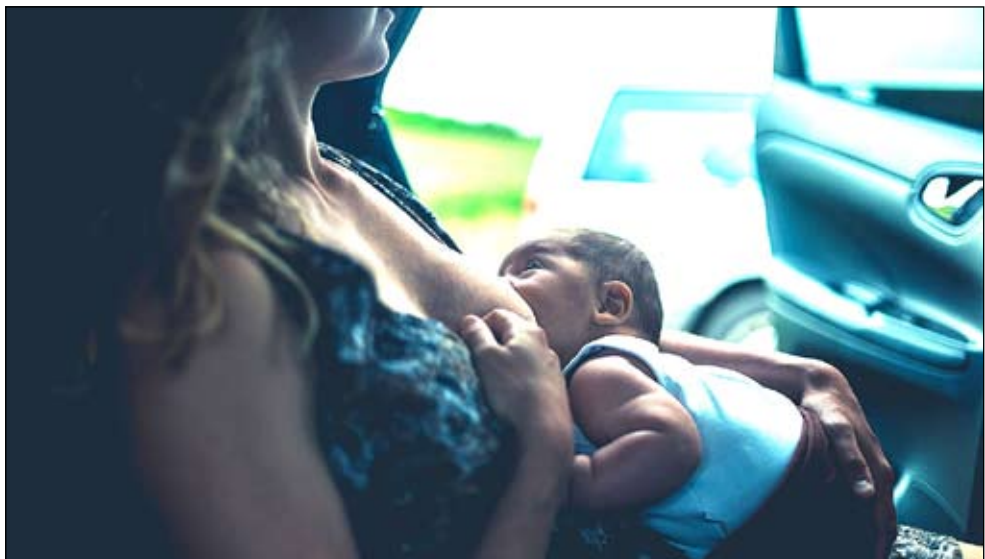
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# The basics of breastfeeding



by Kirrah Stewart



**B**reastfeeding is instinctual, but also requires skills that are learned. It can feel awkward at first but with time, patience and support it can be really satisfying, and is immensely beneficial for babies and mothers.

Babies really love to be held and cuddled. It's where they feel safest. Skin-to-skin contact also regulates their heart rate, temperature and breathing. We are biologically designed to want this.

This cuddling helps parents too. It boosts oxytocin (the love hormone) which helps with bonding and milk production.

Healthy full-term babies will show hunger cues when they need to eat. They may start opening their mouth, rooting, bobbing their head and sticking their tongue out. Newborns have an innate ability to find and latch onto a breast.

They also know when they are finished and can self-regulate feedings. Encouraging this instinct is a basis for biological nurturing. Watch the baby for cues (not the clock).

In some circumstances, the clock actually does need to be watched. A baby that has had a medicated birth, has health complications or congenital issues, may be very sleepy. They may need to be stimulated to feed, be fed more frequently and perhaps supplemented as well.

## What is the breast crawl?

During the first hour after birth, if undisturbed, newborns have instincts and biological processes that help them to self-attach to the breast.

Babies have a stepping reflex and use their senses to initiate a 'breast crawl' towards the mother's breasts and nipples. They may use their hands to massage the breasts and bob their head around until they attach and suckle.

## What is the rooting reflex?

Newborns have reflexes that help them breastfeed. A baby will naturally turn its head towards cheek stimulation.

This can be used to

encourage baby to root and look for the nipple. When baby is ready they will open their mouth and extend their tongue and latch.

## What is laid-back breastfeeding?

The laid back position can be a very comfortable position for mother and baby. Many hours are spent breastfeeding, so it's important that it feels good.

This natural way of feeding is called 'biological nurturing'. It encourages mother and baby to use their instincts and intuition.

To get into this position, the mother can be supported to semi-recline in a laid back position. She can try this in bed or on a couch or chair with pillows at her back for support. The baby is on their belly on the mother's belly and chest (stomach-to-stomach).

## Why is a laid-back position beneficial?

This position is great because gravity helps baby to get good attachment. Their chin can

touch the breast and they can get a deep latch. Attaching to the breast is a full-body experience for newborns.

Laid-back or biological nurturing encourages the baby to use their innate ability to find the nipple, latch and transfer milk.

Try different positions until mother and baby find what suits them best. Parents are the experts on their baby and their newborn also has instincts and reflexes that help them to effectively breastfeed.

For postpartum care and lactation support, reach out to: [kirrah@doulawisdom.com](mailto:kirrah@doulawisdom.com) or text 0429-308-851. You can download the latest birth plan checklist for free at: [www.doulawisdom.com](http://www.doulawisdom.com)

It has a packing list for birth, watercolour pictures of useful labour positions, tips for what to do at each stage of labour and advice for partners.

*Kirrah is a postpartum doula and lactation counsellor supporting families in the Northern Rivers.*



## View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

**T**his morning I thought I heard a happy "yeah" from my morning poo. The collective disassembly of living food dying combined with the newly assembled life of millions of bacteria in my compost loo must be a reason to celebrate.

Life is a reason to celebrate. So is death. We are simply the products of organised elements; death is just a process of undoing all that order. One cannot exist without the other. We are surrounded by death,

## Invoking the warrior

even the most extreme vegan cannot escape the billions of bacteria, viruses and other life that constantly grow and die on, in and around us.

We can either accept the fact that our fate is the same or fight it. Fighting it has negative consequences for our mental health. Samurai warriors believed that they were already dead, and that any time they had left alive was a gift. Hence they could die with dignity and fight with the honor of knowing that they lived life within the integrity of their Bushido code (like chivalry). A pity our soldiers don't get trained like that. PTSD might not be such an issue.

The typical political response to the current pandemic has been to place preservation of life at the forefront of every decision. With a society that fears death this is the obvious choice to attract support and get re-elected. It is also

the best way to keep the most people alive. Faced with a clear choice, most people will support this. Young 'indestructibles', the ones used as front-line cannon fodder during war, typically fear death less and will be the last cohort to get vaccines. Old and frail, overweight, unfit will be first. This is normal and all fine.

However, when governments start talking about mandatory vaccinations, vax passports and tiered societies, another cohort needs to be recognised.

There is a very large group of people who believe in the right to choose, and they sit on both sides of the vax fence. These people adhere to a strong ethical code, and like the Samurai, will fight for it. They are the type of people that have stood up for freedom from oppression for centuries.

They will sometimes choose freedom over life. Freedom to accept a risk to their own health. Freedom to live their lives without impediments imposed by a death-fearing society. As a collective, either vaxed or not, we should continue to fight for a single society, not one where your passport to freedom is a vaccine once a year. In our current political climate, it would be all too easy for government to take advantage of the situation and thrust us one step closer to a fascist state.

Let us honour and support those amongst us that care little for their own mortality but continue to live their lives with integrity. After all, the best thing we can do for the planet is to keep dying.

*Stuart runs Pooh Solutions, waste water consultants and composting toilets. Phone 0427-897-496 or email: [poohsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:poohsolutions@gmail.com)*



# There are gods in all things



by Miriam Latif

I think one of our most fundamental dis-eases is that we live in a world that has become so thoroughly dis-encharmed, we forget that we live amongst a pantheon of archetypal forces.

What modern science calls gravity, the Greeks named Eros. The rumbling of the Earth in a quake would have been imagined as Hephaestus in his subterranean forge. A plague or pandemic the divine justice of the Furies.

Not only did the ancients recognise divine forces without, they also recognised them *within*. The histamine that rages in your blood is not just a neurotransmitter. It is an experience of irritation, alarm and excitability. It makes your skin come out in big red blotches, causes you to feel angry and keeps you awake at

night. Every time both your skin and psyche turn red and ruddy, the Greeks would say you are possessed by Aries himself – God of War

On the other end, the oestrogen that pulses through those with a female reproductive system is an expression of Aphrodite – the feminine gesture instantiated in the theatre of the body. Oestrogen excess means feminine generation goes unchecked – breasts swell, blood builds and adipose abounds. Think of the Birth of Venus and you are on the right track.

To be clear, this is a lens and a language, not to be taken literally. The advantage of using this lens is that it provides us with an image to not only see the intrinsic nature of our symptoms, but a window into the psyche as well. For the ancients, binary modes of thought were far less existent – there was no split between body and mind.

Moreover, a profound psychological shift happens when we can relate to our experience of dis-ease (and wellness) as a ‘God’. In deifying dis-ease – we suddenly have an image to relate to. It enables us to ask questions like “what dynamic am I possessed by?”, and “what do I need to invite in to bring balance?”



If you are dominated by the god-fire of Aries, perhaps you need to move towards Aphrodite’s sweet, Venusian embrace. Not only will you need moist and cool herbs to temper your histaminergic fire, but this soft Venusian gesture will have to run through the foods you eat, the lifestyle practices you choose and most importantly, the state of your psyche.

I am not at all suggesting a reversion back to an archaic mode of being, or some New Age pagan revival. I am trying to reclaim and revive a lens where, as the ancient Greek philosopher Thales said, “there are gods in all things”.

Since we live in a dis-encharmed world, medicine itself has become sterilised, cold and reductive. The Hippocratic tradition has a history of ‘temple medicine’ – where people would come to a healing centre called an

Asclepeion to be healed not only by herbs and diet, but by participating in rituals where they entered underground sensory deprivation chambers – a practice that was called *incubatio*. There was a time where medicine and mystery were seen as twin faces of the same Hermetic God.

In our tragic tendency to draw divides and trenches, we have sadly separated medicine and mystery, reason and reverence. I am always looking towards the ancients to remember that the clinic is a temple, plants are powers, and that there are indeed gods in all things, especially us. We are the Pantheon.

Miriam is a Traditional Western Herbalist who works in Nimbin. You can contact her at: [info@theopenheartapothecary.org](mailto:info@theopenheartapothecary.org) or find her on social media by searching for The Open Heart Apothecary.



## Serendipity

A few weeks ago, a friend and I went whale-watching off Byron Bay. The day started auspiciously enough when we drove out to the dive shop. Things were going well.

We arrived in good time and found a car parking spot fairly close by. At the shop we watched a video on what we might see out on the boat, piled in a bus and headed off to The Pass where the boat was launched by a four-wheel drive.

The plan was to walk through the shallows and climb into the boat, but first the car had to leave the beach. It couldn’t. It was bogged. The tide was coming up, which didn’t look promising.

Another 4WD turned up to get the first one out of the shallow water, but, lo that got bogged as well. A small towing truck turned up to help, and successfully pulled the second 4WD out of the shallows. We cheered.

Inexplicably, so I thought, the second 4WD and not the truck went back down to retrieve the first car, which by then, was practically drifting away. The first car was saved, and remarkably still driveable, and the second car went back into the shallows to retrieve the trailer that was partially submerged. That was saved and it and all three vehicles headed back up the beach to the road and away.

The tide was coming up and the waves were getting bigger as we, an hour later, waded to the boat. We got aboard and started getting really drenched as the waves crashed on top of us, but we decided to continue the planned expedition out to sea.

Turtles swam by, dolphins appeared and disappeared and reappeared, and we saw breaching whales rising and diving as we travelled beyond Julian Rocks. We followed them to the edge of the marine park that is out there and delighted in all the life around us. It was truly wonderful.

It was, though, getting really late, and so it was decided to return to shore. And so we did. I was hungry, weak with hunger actually, having had only a light breakfast many hours before, so on getting out of the boat I promptly fell into the water. It seems this was serendipity at work for we could not



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

eat at a particular Japanese restaurant as planned, or in fact anywhere in Byron because I was drenched; socially unacceptably wet all over.

Now it turns out that this restaurant that we couldn’t go to was the same one visited by a Sydney man and his two sons on the same day around the same time. This little family, it turns out, had the Covid-19 virus. If we had been there, we would have had to be in quarantine for two weeks; or worse, we could’ve got sick. Getting too wet effectively saved us from that happening.

Serendipity, finding the fortunate while not even trying, feels like a gift. I certainly am very glad of it, but...

It is easy at such times to try to read much more into such things than may be there. I am, by nature, not inclined to do so. I do not appeal to divine interventions nor other grand schemes, preferring, instead, to determine what I need to do at the time and more or less accept things as they arise and deal with them thoughtfully.

I see life as an experiment where we do not really know the outcomes, but where we can explore, test, and examine what happens next. There is life and there is death, for sure, and we are capable of making choices, but there are also things that happen serendipitously.

What happened for me could well have been caused by nothing more than an inadequate and too early breakfast. Maybe.

Serendipity or not, our task, my task, is to act with awareness; to be present and conscious in this beautiful world we are part of, and to be responsible for self, and others as fellow free agents.

## A happiness formula for everyone

Happiness is not an end point but rather a state of mind, and transient in nature.

We each have variations in our state of mind throughout each day. We can be happy, then melancholic, sad, angry, asleep, happy again, despondent, arrogant, selfless, compassionate, and so on.

This can change rapidly or slowly depending on our circumstance and life experience at any point in time.

This means that “happy” is transient and not permanent.

But more importantly, what is happiness? The best description or definition of happiness that I have found was that provided by Dan Millman in his book, *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*. In this book he provides a formula for happiness.

Where we have insufficient resources to satisfy our desires, the formula will give a result less than 1 and we will not be happy (or content) because our desires cannot be fulfilled.

The formula also provides answers that will enable happiness (or contentment):

1. Reduce your desires to the level where you have the resources to fulfill them, OR
2. Get more resources
3. A bit of both of the above

So what is preventing us from being happy? The world is more and more being engulfed by consumerism. The supporting advertising images presented in mainstream media, on billboards, in social media, by peers, family, culture and so on, create the desire to buy more so we can fit in with the images being presented.

Our desires are being force-fed to us to support the consumer-capitalistic model to a level where most have not sufficient resources to meet their new “forced-on” desires. We therefore are not happy or content!

### Moving toward happiness

By looking within ourselves to understand our true self, our beliefs and values, we will be able to determine our real desires and shed the “forced-on” desires or not take them on in the first place.



by Peter Ganser, NLP Master Practitioner

This will allow you to move toward and even achieve happiness more often (remember happiness is transient) because you will more likely have the resources to meet your real desires.

If you discover that you need to increase your resources to meet your real desires, you will likely find that the extra required is not as much as you previously thought, once you have shed the “forced-on” desires. Be mindful that in seeking additional resources you maintain that which is important to you.

For example, getting a better paid job may also mean more hours at work or increased stress, or longer commutes, which may impact family and social connections, increase your health costs, cost more in travel, and so on.

Where to begin? The answer to “being happy” is unique to each person. To begin to answer this for yourself, begin with evaluating your desires and shedding those that have been “forced-on” you.

Peter Ganser can be contacted on 0444-561-541, or go to: [www.peterganser.com.au](http://www.peterganser.com.au)



Happiness =  $\frac{\text{Satisfaction}}{\text{Desires}}$

*“If you have enough money (or resources) to satisfy your desires you are rich. There are two ways to be rich. You can earn, inherit, borrow, beg or steal enough money to meet expensive desires; or, you can cultivate a simple lifestyle of few desires; that way you will always have more than enough money.”*