



the modern domestic woman

NOVEMBER 2025

November 2025 MDW MAG

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear MDW Family,

Not long ago, someone asked me where our brick-and-mortar location was. They had just finished reading the magazine and said, "It's so beautiful, I assumed there had to be a physical space."

That moment made me smile, because that's exactly the energy we hope you feel when you open these pages: like you've stepped into a place that's warm, real, and alive with women supporting women. And truthfully, that is the dream. To one day have a dedicated space where women can gather, shop, sip coffee, connect, and advocate for one another in person.

But in so many ways, that dream is already here. Every monthly event, support group, and in-person meetup we host is its own version of that space; a living, breathing community where women show up for one another with honesty, humor, and care.

This issue captures that spirit beautifully. It's filled with women doing meaningful things in ordinary moments: Zoe Sherwin turning neighborly kindness into financial empowerment, Blakely Kresl reminding us how grannycore hobbies can nourish the brain and soul, and Laura Lange guiding us through the "sober curious" movement with self-awareness and grace.

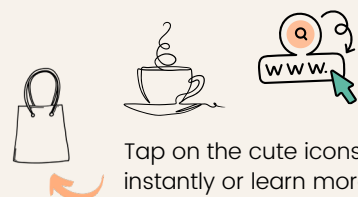
You'll also find stories that invite you to pause and reflect, from Sara Curtin's meditation on gratitude that holds both light and shadow, to Lovey Kaur's exploration of how AI is reshaping our emotional lives. And through it all, the heartbeat of MDW Cares runs steady, with our "SNAP to It" campaign and local therapists offering care that's compassionate and stigma-free.

Every story, recipe, product, and reflection we share is meant to feel like a small exhale, a moment of connection, beauty, and clarity.

So whether you're here for inspiration, resources, fashion, or simply a reason to breathe a little deeper, I hope these pages remind you that care, for yourself and others, can be both powerful, uplifting, and tender.

With hope for what we're building together,

Elizabeth Rago
MDW Founder & Editor



Tap on the cute icons to shop instantly or learn more about the product featured.

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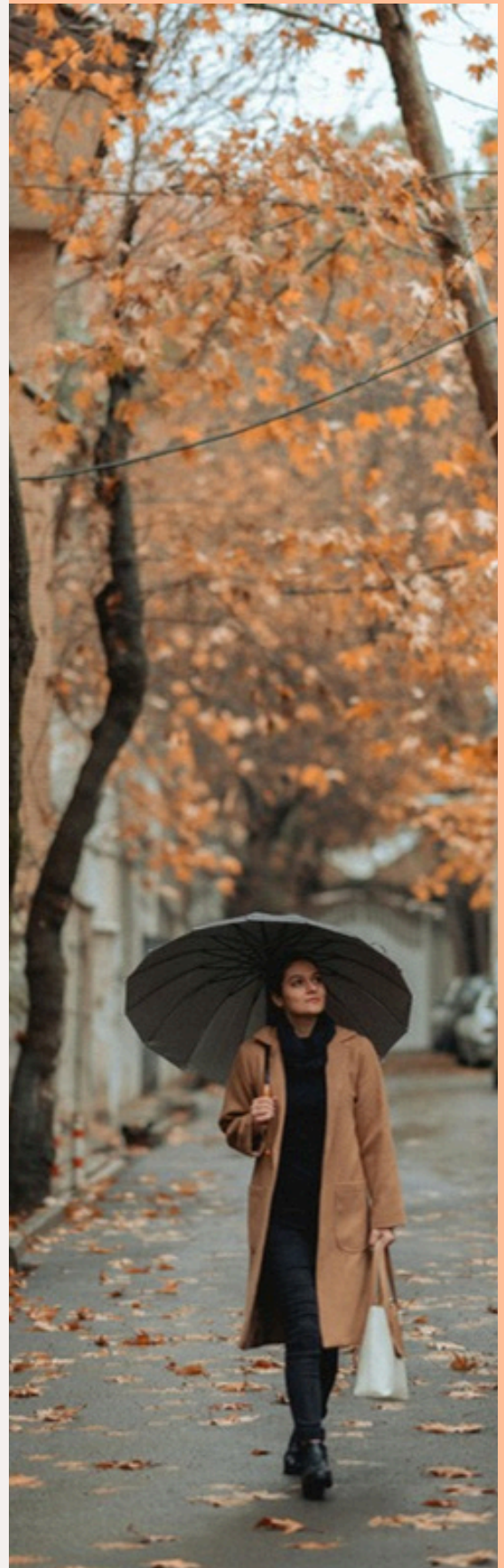
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Serving season is upon us, and we’ve got accessories for your tabletop, phases of the moon, Thanksgiving inspo, and a homemade pumpkin spice latte.



— Profile



Zoe and her daughter

Meet Zoe Sherwin

Every so often, you meet someone who turns a simple idea into a ripple of impact. For mom of two, realtor, and women's advocate Zoe Sherwin, that "simple idea" often begins with honest conversations and grows into something far bigger than herself.

As a broker with Keller Williams Inspire, Zoe shows and sells houses by day, but what she's really showing the world is how a values-driven life can serve others. Her grandparents, immigrants from Greece, taught her early on that joy and pride live in the simple rhythms of life, kneading bread by hand, tending a garden with bare feet in the soil, and lingering over long family meals filled with laughter and great food.

It's this foundation that shapes Zoe's way of moving through the world. Whether she's helping a client find or sell a home, hosting a free community swap, or talking openly about women's health and body positivity, her approach is the same: listen deeply, act generously, and lead with heart.

"I've never believed change starts in a boardroom," Zoe says. "It starts in someone's kitchen, or driveway, or front yard, where real people show up for each other."

Through her work and her presence, Zoe doesn't just build community, she reminds us what it looks like to be community.

Breaking Down Barriers



From left to right: Zoe, MDW Founder Elizabeth Rago, and MDW Mental Health Advisor Carrie Summers

Zoe has also hosted a free item swap earlier this spring, a place where clothing, toys, and home goods could be donated, collected, or swapped entirely for free. A simple table becomes a lifeline, an entry point to connection, dignity, and resource sharing.

What began as a marketed “spring cleaning” event became so much more: neighbors chatting, newcomers meeting longtime residents, anxious parents trading outgrown gear, and women supporting one another. This event is part of Zoe’s mission to lower the bar for community access and raise the floor for everyday resilience.

“I wanted to create a space where women could show up as they are—no price tags, no pressure just people helping people.” - Zoe

“Money shouldn’t be a mystery, it’s a tool. The more we talk about it, the more we take our power back.” - Zoe

From Home Goods to Money Talks

Zoe’s commitment to women’s empowerment doesn’t stop at decluttering. In January 2026, she’ll host her second Women’s Financial Literacy Workshop called “Invested in Her.” (Scheduled for January 24th) The event will cover budgeting, investing, credit, and the kind of money conversations many women avoid, but in this space, don’t have to.

“Talking about money isn’t taboo, it’s freedom,” shares Zoe. “The moment we start the conversation, we start taking our power back.”

For Zoe, money conversations belong right alongside wellness, parenting, and community care. Because empowerment touches every corner of a woman’s life.

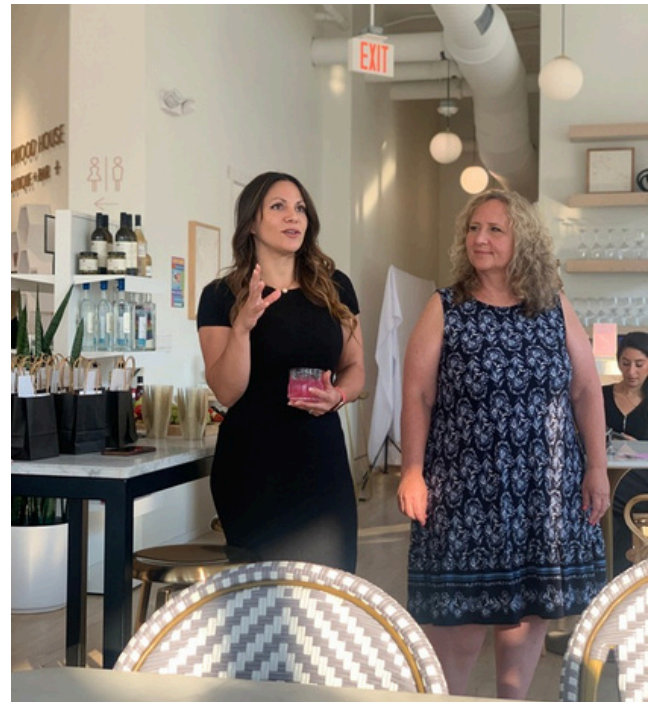
Whole-Body, Whole-Hearted: Zoe Sherwin's Everyday Advocacy

Zoe's advocacy runs deeper than clean living; it's about helping women feel at home in their own skin. A proud champion of body positivity, she reminds the women around her that wellness isn't about perfection; it's about presence. Whether she's hosting a swap, sharing a recipe, or showing a home, Zoe brings the same grounded energy: you are enough, right where you are.

If you know Zoe, you know she's the first to cheer you on. She'll listen without judgment, help you unpack a hard topic, and then brainstorm practical ways to move forward. And she doesn't stop there. She'll check in, follow up, and, if she can, roll up her sleeves to help you do it. That kind of steady, genuine support makes Zoe not just a community builder, but an asset and blessing to anyone lucky enough to cross her path.

Her roots in simplicity run deep, thanks to her Greek grandparents, who modeled a life centered on gratitude, homegrown food, and meaningful connection. Today, Zoe carries that same spirit into her parenting, her real estate work, and every community event she touches.

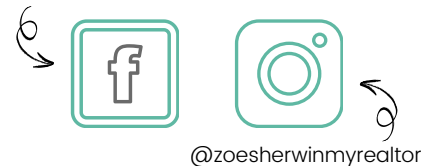
For Zoe, "support local" isn't just a hashtag; it's a way of life.



Zoe speaking at the first Financial Literacy Event in 2025

Follow Zoe on social:

Zoe Sherwin – Realtor / Keller Williams Inspire



@zoesherwinmyrealtor

Learn more about the 2026
Financial Empowerment Event

Invested In Her *A woman's Guide to Financial Freedom*

JAN 24
6pm-8pm

REALTOR ASSOCIATION FOX VALLEY
406 SURREY WOODS DRIVE
ST. CHARLES

IMAGINE A SPACE WHERE
WOMEN FROM ALL WALKS OF
LIFE COME TOGETHER TO LEARN
AND GROW FINANCIALLY
REGISTRATION REQUIRED



*"Empowerment doesn't have to be
loud. Sometimes it's a hand on
your shoulder and someone saying,
'You're not doing this alone.'"* – Zoe



LIFESTYLE

SHERPA

Cozy meets classic in this sherpa bomber jacket. The perfect blend of comfort and style for cooler days.

With its collared neckline, cable-knit detailing, and soft fleece finish, it adds just the right amount of texture and warmth to any outfit.

A front zipper and elastic cuffs give it that effortless, everyday polish, ideal for everything from morning coffee runs to evening strolls.



Minnie Sherpa Bomber Jacket

BOHME

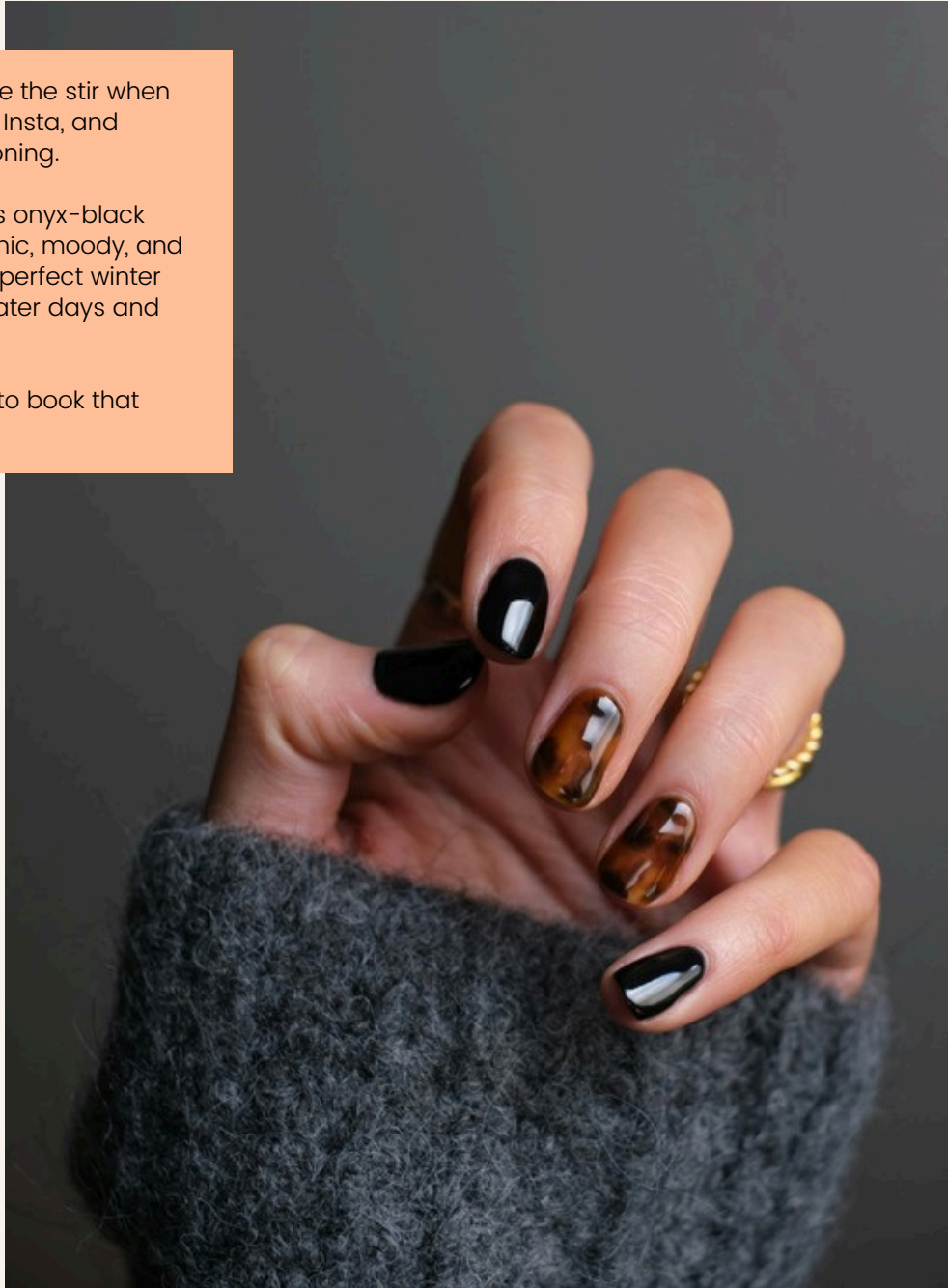


NAILS

These nails caused quite the stir when we shared them on our Insta, and honestly, we're still swooning.

The tortoise-shell meets onyx-black combo is equal parts chic, moody, and quietly glamorous... the perfect winter manicure for cozy-sweater days and holiday-party nights.

Consider this your sign to book that appointment.



Nail Inspiration

BRYONY ELENA



WALLETS



*Take
a
Peek*



Burnout Velvet Orange Card Wallet



Oriental Avocado Card Wallet



Oriental Pink Card Wallet

We couldn't choose just one, so this month, we're featuring multiple handcrafted wallets from Max Carpetbag Works. Each piece is made from richly textured chenille carpet fabric with a silky lining and vintage-inspired clasp.

With thoughtful accordion-style slots for cards, cash, and more, these wallets bring a touch of artisanal elegance and timeless style to everyday life.

MITTENS



There's just something about mittens...they keep your hands warmer than gloves and feel like a cozy hug for your fingers.

These color-block beauties from one of our favorite local shops, House of 423 in Geneva, Illinois, are reverse-knit with a soft fleece lining and comfy cuff.

You can shop them in-store or online, perfect for gifting or keeping for yourself!

Knit Color Block Mittens

House of 423



BAG

As the holidays (and travel plans) pile up, a bigger, sturdier bag becomes a must, and this carpet bag delivers both function and flair.

With roomy compartments, thoughtful interior pockets, and a detachable shoulder strap, it's the perfect companion for weekend getaways or festive family visits.

In fact, it's practically perfect in every way.



Mary Poppins Weekender
MAX CARPETBAG WORKS





Grannycore is the New Brain Food

by Blakely Kresl



HOW GRANNYCORE TURNED EVERYDAY HOBBIES INTO A SLOW-LIVING MOVEMENT

What once used to be tucked away in grandma's sewing basket is now finding new life in dorm rooms, studio apartments, and cozy corners everywhere. Crochet hooks, recipe cards, and scrapbooks are back, and they're bringing a little peace with them.

Grannycore is the trend of the season, or maybe even the decade. Within the past few years, the term "grannycore," often intertwined with the cottagecore aesthetic, has blossomed across social media and modern pop culture. Both have resurrected the gentle art of slowing down and embracing hobbies and aesthetics once popular among older generations.

These aesthetics and hobbies inspire people to turn off their phones and embrace the moment. Whether that be spending time weaving your fingers through knit, trying out a new craft, or meeting up with friends for a board game night.

There's something grounding about starting something from scratch. Simple and tactile experiences feel like a small rebellion against the digital world. Many people describe these grannycore hobbies as a return to presence in a time where scrolling replaces stillness.

However calming and exciting these hobbies may be, they are more than just a trend. New studies are showing that these so-called "grannycore" activities aren't just a way to pass the time, but that they're good for the brain. What was once done out of necessity— stitching, baking, preserving — is now being rediscovered as healthy cognitive exercises for many modern women and girls today.

Through the grannycore social media trend, these once utilitarian pastimes have sparked imagination, inspiring a generation to practice slowing down and getting into tune with the subtleties of simple, rhythmic activity.

A National Geographic article published in 2025 mentioned recent studies that found a positive connection between slow tactical tasks and long-term cognitive health. These tasks include fine motor engagement, mindfulness, and getting into your own creative flow benefits your ever-evolving brain.



Beyond brain plasticity, researchers have found that engaging in repetitive, calming activities like knitting or baking can lower cortisol levels, the body's primary stress hormone. The rhythmic motion of crafting activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the body's natural "rest and digest" response, helping to ease anxiety and improve mood. Many therapists now incorporate art and tactile hobbies into mindfulness-based therapy because they promote focus, patience, and self-compassion. Best of all, these activities can be enjoyed alone at home or shared with friends, making them both accessible and communally rewarding.

Research also shows that hands-on activities like knitting, baking, or painting can reduce anxiety and improve mood by lowering cortisol levels and activating the parasympathetic nervous system (Simply Psychology, 2023). Even a few minutes a day can reinforce focus, patience, and emotional resilience, offering a small but meaningful boost to brain health.

Learning a new skill, activity, or hobby and challenging yourself with it helps to build brain neuroplasticity- the brain's ability to change and adapt throughout life. True cognitive growth comes when you push yourself to learn something new. The confrontation with a challenge is where the magic of cognitive growth happens. Every time you dive into a new craft, recipe, or creative pursuit, you're exercising neuroplasticity, strengthening your brain's ability to adapt, grow, and stay resilient.



CREATIVE IDEAS TO CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN AND BUILD NEUROPLASTICITY

It's okay to set aside a skill that no longer excites you, what matters is picking up another challenge that sparks curiosity. Here are some ideas to keep your brain engaged:

Knitting or crocheting

Tips to get started:

Check out Atlanta-based fiber artist Mijanou of Ikoxun. She has a "How to Knit Tutorial" for beginners on Youtube.



Find the tutorial here!

Crafting jewelry

Tips to get started:

Bijoux Komorebi has a Daisy Bracelet tutorial where you can experiment with new materials and techniques.

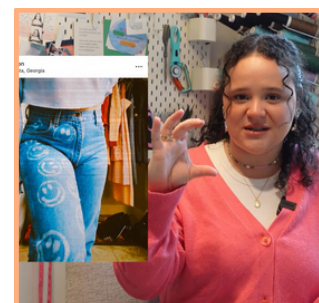


Find the tutorial here!

Upcycling clothes

Tips to get started:

New to upcycling? Try Paola's Youtube channel for no-sew hacks and easy beginner-friendly techniques for sustainable fashion.



Find Paola's channel here!

Gardening

Tips to get started:

Urban farmer Natasha Nichols empowers gardeners by teaching the why and how behind every growing challenge.



Join the We Sow mailing list + follow Natasha on social!

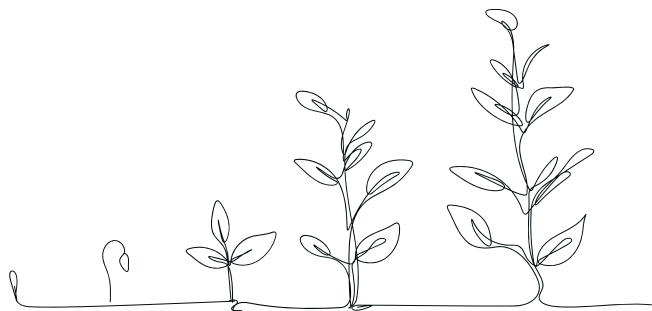
Other Ideas to Embrace Slowing Down:

- #1 Learning a musical instrument: even a few minutes a day of practice builds new neural pathways.
- #2 Puzzle and strategy games: crosswords, logic puzzles, chess or board games that make you think ahead.
- #3 Writing creatively: short stories, poetry, or journaling in a new style or perspective.
- #4 Language learning: pick up a few words a day in a new language or explore calligraphy.
- #5 Cooking new recipes: explore unfamiliar cuisines or complex baking techniques.

Our brains can and will continue to adapt and improve with age, while certain processes may slow down, the brain's capacity for growth and change remains, explains Dr. Alvaro Pascual-Leone of Harvard's Hebrew SeniorLife Center for Memory Health.

In many ways, the grannycore movement isn't about nostalgia, it's about slowing down and practicing intentional activities in a society that often demands constant productivity. It's about creation with no expectation, and finding satisfaction simply in the act of starting something new or challenging. The reward isn't the end product, but the process itself.

You don't need to master a skill overnight to experience the benefits. Just a few minutes each day spent on a new hobby, skill, or interest can make a lasting impact over time. What matters most, and shows the most positive results, is challenging yourself. Try building a routine of trying new things, learning, maybe even failing, and continuing to grow.



About the Author:

Blakely Kresl is a contributing writer for The Modern Domestic Woman and a rising voice in women's health communication and community storytelling. With hands-on experience in marketing, PR, and brand strategy, Blakely is passionate about helping purpose-driven organizations connect with their audiences through authenticity and impact.

She has supported mission-based brands like FemPAQ, a sustainable menstrual health company focused on period equity and destigmatization, and Asami Naturals, an African tea brand rooted in tradition and wellness. From curating content and coordinating events to managing farmers market outreach and digital campaigns, Blakely brings curiosity, empathy, and creativity to every project.

Blakely's work celebrates the connection between women, brands, and communities, reminding us that meaningful change often starts with a shared story.

Connect with Blakely on [LinkedIn](#).





Simmer Pots for Every Mood



Simmer pots are your kitchen's secret weapon. Part stovetop candle, part aromatherapy, part little spell. All you need is a pot of water, a handful of ingredients, and a little intention. As the ingredients bubble away, your whole home fills with scent and warmth. Perfect for setting the tone of the day or turning a chilly night into something cozy.

For a cozy day

Apple slices,
cinnamon sticks
& clove

Try this:

Add a dash of vanilla extract for extra sweetness, or toss in star anise for a little magic-star energy.



What's one thing you can do today to make your space feel cozier? Light a candle, fluff the pillows, put on soft socks?

For comfort

Orange slices,
vanilla bean
& star anise

Try this:

Add a cinnamon stick for more warmth, or fresh ginger slices to wake up your senses.



What memory makes you feel safe and held? Let the scent bring it closer as you breathe it in.

For a fresh start

Lemon, rosemary
& bay leaf

Try this:

Add a sprinkle of sea salt to "seal" the freshness or a few peppercorns for a grounding note.



What do you want to release before moving forward? A lingering thought, frustration, or stale energy? Picture it evaporating with the steam.



Embracing the Sober Curious Movement: A Journey of Self-Discovery

by Laura Lange, LCSW

Embracing the Sober Curious Movement

In recent years, a new trend has emerged that encourages individuals to rethink their relationship with alcohol: the "sober curious" movement. This fascinating cultural shift invites people to explore a lifestyle that doesn't revolve around drinking, offering a fresh perspective on socializing, self-care, and personal growth.

Whether you're contemplating a break from alcohol or simply seeking to understand this growing phenomenon, this article will guide you through the principles of being sober curious, and the potential benefits it can bring to your life.



What Does "Sober Curious" Mean?

The term "sober curious" was popularized by Ruby Warrington in her 2018 book, *Sober Curious: Change Your Drinking, Change Your Life*. It refers to those who are questioning their drinking habits without necessarily identifying as "sober" or in recovery. Sober curious individuals may choose to abstain from alcohol temporarily or reduce their intake as they explore the effects of drinking on their physical and mental well-being.

The movement is about awareness and choice. It empowers individuals to evaluate their relationship with alcohol, encouraging them to consider how it impacts their health, relationships, and lifestyle. The sober curious mindset promotes mindfulness and intentionality in decision-making, allowing for a deeper connection with oneself and others.

Why Go Sober Curious?

There are many reasons people choose to adopt a sober curious lifestyle. Here are a few compelling motivations to explore this way of living...

1

Exploring New Activities

Choosing to go sober opens the door to exploring new hobbies and interests that don't revolve around drinking.

This can lead to discovering new passions, meeting new friends, and finding fulfillment in a variety of activities, from fitness classes to art workshops.



2

Creating a Supportive Community

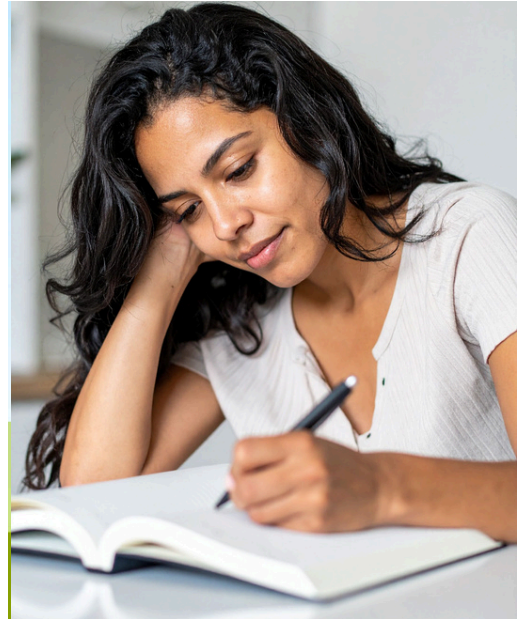
The sober curious movement has fostered a sense of community among those seeking to change their drinking habits.

Online forums, local meetups, and social media groups provide a supportive environment where individuals can share their experiences, challenges, and triumphs.

3

Emotional Awareness

Alcohol is often used as a coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, or social pressures. By stepping back from drinking, sober curious individuals gain an opportunity to confront and process their emotions. This can lead to greater emotional resilience and a deeper understanding of oneself.



4

Building Authentic Connections

Socializing without alcohol can foster more meaningful relationships. Engaging in conversations and activities without the influence of alcohol can lead to deeper connections and more authentic interactions.

Many sober curious individuals report feeling more present and engaged in their social lives.

5

Enhanced Physical Well-Being

Many individuals discover that reducing or eliminating alcohol from their lives leads to improved physical health. Sleep quality often improves, energy levels rise, and mental clarity returns. These benefits can enhance overall productivity and focus, creating a positive ripple effect in various aspects of life.



How to Embrace the Sober Curious Lifestyle

If you're considering joining the sober curious movement, here are some practical tips to get you started:

1

Reflect on Your Relationship with Alcohol

Take time to assess your drinking habits. Consider how often you drink, the reasons behind it, and how it makes you feel. Journaling your thoughts can help clarify your motivations and goals.

2

Set Goals

Decide what being sober curious means for you. Whether it's a month-long challenge or simply reducing your intake, setting clear goals can help you stay focused on your journey. Find a Daily Reflection sheet on the next page.

*Print your own
reflection sheet* →

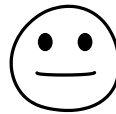


daily REFLECTION

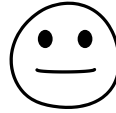
Today is:

My support person is:

How I feel about today:



How I want to feel today:



Habit Tracker

Notes & Reflections

Healthy & positive habits I tried today

3

Explore Alternatives

Discover the world of non-alcoholic beverages. From sophisticated mocktails to alcohol-free craft beers, there are countless options available that allow you to enjoy social occasions without compromising your goals.

4

Create a Support System

Share your intentions with friends and family, or seek out others who are also exploring a sober curious lifestyle. Having a support system can help you stay accountable and motivated.

5

Embrace the Journey

Remember that being sober curious is a personal journey. There's no right or wrong way to approach it. Celebrate your successes, learn from any challenges, and be open to the transformative experiences that come your way.

Remember, the sober curious movement is more than just a trend; it's a powerful invitation to examine our relationship with alcohol and prioritize our well-being. By embracing this lifestyle, individuals can experience enhanced health, deeper connections, and greater self-awareness.

Whether you're ready to dive in or curious about what a sober lifestyle entails, know that this journey is yours to define. Here's to discovering the beauty of clarity and the joy of living life fully sober and curious!

About the Author:

Laura Lange, LCSW, CADAC, CODP I, EMDR Trained
& Co-owner of Restorative Behavioral Health

Navigating the world of therapy can be overwhelming, but Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Laura Lange is here to make it easier.

As a therapist, Laura blends professionalism with compassion to create a safe and supportive space for her clients. She works with adolescents and adults on issues like anxiety, trauma, OCD, depression, and more, including couples seeking premarital counseling.

Trained in EMDR, Laura collaborates with medical providers and families to ensure comprehensive care.

Learn more about Laura and her practice, Restorative Behavioral Health at restorativebh.com





Gratitude On & Off the Mat: Embracing the Light & the Dark

by Sara Curtin
Flower of Life Yoga & Wellness Center



FROM MAT FLOW TO LIFE FLOW

Gratitude is often easiest to access when life feels bright – when the path is clear, our bodies are strong, and our hearts are open. But yoga teaches us that true gratitude extends far beyond the moments of ease. It invites us to give thanks not only for what is comfortable and joyful, but also for what challenges and transforms us.

On the Mat – When we step onto our mat, gratitude can begin with the simple act of arriving. Each breath, each pose, becomes an offering – a chance to honor the body for carrying us through, no matter its current strength or stiffness.

We can express gratitude by slowing down, by noticing how the body feels today rather than how we wish it would feel.

When balance wavers, when the mind resists stillness, these too are opportunities to practice – to bow to imperfection and give thanks for the awareness it brings.

In this way, gratitude on the mat becomes less about performance and more about presence. It's a quiet thank-you whispered through movement, a softening toward what is.

Off the Mat – Beyond the mat, gratitude is the bridge between our practice and our daily lives. It's found in the mundane moments – a warm cup of coffee, a kind word, a sunset that catches us by surprise.

But it's also found in the darker times: the heartbreaks, the pauses, the endings we didn't expect. These moments teach us resilience, humility, and surrender.

When life feels shadowed, gratitude doesn't ask us to deny our pain. Instead, it gently asks: What is this moment showing me? What strength is being revealed?

From this perspective, even the dark becomes a teacher – helping us grow in empathy, compassion, and inner wisdom.



Grateful for the Darkness

As the seasons shift and the days grow shorter, we're reminded that darkness is not the absence of light – it's a space of renewal.

Just as nature retreats inward to rest and restore, we too can honor our own seasons of stillness.

In those quiet, unseen spaces, gratitude becomes an anchor – reminding us that transformation often begins in the dark.

So, whether you're on your mat finding breath in a challenging pose, or off your mat navigating the unknowns of life, may you carry gratitude with you – not only for what shines, but for what teaches you to see in the dark.

About the Author:

Sara Curtin is the founder and owner of Flower of Life Yoga & Wellness Center, in St. Charles, housed in a 100-year-old ivy-covered cottage, one of St. Charles' historic treasures.

With its original studio pillars and century-old gardens, the space offers a unique backdrop for yoga, Reiki, Acupuncture, and Sound Therapy. Sara began her yoga journey in 2016, earning her RYT 200 and Children's Yoga certifications in Costa Rica, where she also explored transformative practices like Breathwork and Kundalini Yoga.

Since then, she has taught thousands of hours across Hot Yoga, Restorative, Vinyasa, and Yoga Strength, earning her E-RYT designation and co-facilitating teacher trainings. At Flower of Life, Sara blends traditional wisdom with strength-based approaches to help students build resilience, heal, and thrive.

Off the mat, she enjoys early mornings, time outdoors with her family, and is currently exploring Tai Chi.



CLEANSE



As the seasons shift and more people move through your home for gatherings and holidays, it's the perfect time for a little energetic reset.

This Sage Smudge Stick Bundle, featuring sage, selenite, and palo santo, helps clear the air (literally and emotionally) while grounding your space in calm.

Light, cleanse, and breathe, a gentle ritual to make your home feel like you again.

Smudge Stick Bundle
SAGE HEALING COLLECTIVE





ADVOCACY

SNAP TO IT: A COMMUNITY-FUELED RESPONSE TO HUNGER AND HOPE

As the holidays draw near, many of us will gather around tables filled with food, laughter, and gratitude. But for some families in our community, those same tables are sparse. Not from a lack of effort, but because of a crucial delay.

A delay in something as essential as food assistance.

At MDW Cares, we believe no one should face that kind of fear alone. That's why we launched "SNAP to It," a local mutual-aid initiative providing grocery store gift cards to Kane County residents struggling to make ends meet while waiting for their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to renew.

When SNAP benefits are delayed, the impact is immediate. Families who are already doing everything they can, working, caregiving, juggling multiple jobs, are suddenly left wondering how to feed their kids that week.

Our goal is simple: to make sure no one feels forgotten in those moments of uncertainty.



A Community Food Relief Fund
sponsored by MDWcares

From Personal Struggle to Community Action

This campaign was born out of lived experience. From 2010 to 2013, our founder Elizabeth Rago and her family faced a series of events that left them mentally, physically, and financially exhausted.

"I remember staring at an empty fridge, wondering how we were going to feed our kids, buy diapers, or put gas in the car," Elizabeth recalls. "We were embarrassed, mentally exhausted, and afraid."

Those years revealed how isolating financial hardship can be — and how hard it is to ask for help when you don't even know where to begin. Out of that struggle grew The Modern Domestic Woman (MDW), first as a lifestyle blog and eventually as a movement grounded in real-life support.

Today, MDW Cares is the nonprofit arm of that movement, offering mental health and community resources without stigma or judgment. And with SNAP to It, we're extending that mission even further to make sure every family feels seen, supported, and sustained.

"We know what it feels like to pretend you have it all together while you're drowning behind closed doors," Elizabeth says. "That's why we created MDW Cares, and now, SNAP to It, to remind people they're not alone."

Mutual Aid in Motion

Through community donations, we purchase grocery store gift cards and distribute them confidentially to local residents in need. There are no hoops to jump through, no complicated forms, just direct, compassionate care.

We believe food insecurity isn't a reflection of someone's effort. It's often the result of low wages, unexpected hardships, or systems that make getting help unnecessarily hard. As a community, we can respond differently, with empathy, trust, and action.

"Real leaders don't take away basic needs and look away," Elizabeth says. "They roll up their sleeves and make sure everyone at the table is fed."

How You Can Help

If you'd like to join us in this effort, you can contribute directly through the MDW Cares website, where every dollar goes toward grocery store gift cards for local families. Those in need of assistance can fill out a short, confidential request form.

You can also help by downloading and displaying our SNAP to It flyer in your business, school, or faith community to spread the word.

This campaign is a reminder that true community care isn't theoretical, it's hands-on. It's one grocery card, one conversation, one act of kindness at a time.



Learn more about
the Snap To It Campaign



Apply for Support



OUR NERVOUS
SYSTEMS

*are doing the
best they can*

TO KEEP US
ALIVE.

*A trauma therapist
shares how to
steady ourselves -
and act.*



the modern
**domestic
woman**



A TRAUMA THERAPIST ON SURVIVING COLLECTIVE FEAR & THE COURAGE TO ACT

by Priscilla Dean, LCPC
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
Evergreen Counseling, Wheaton, IL



Ever since Monday, September 17th, when governmental forces came to my neighborhood to terrorize my neighbors, I've been in a whirlwind of emotions and overwhelm. Initially, I froze. I had no way to know what to do or how to respond.

While I know my white skin protects me, the fear and overwhelm came for me anyway.

Denial too.

They can't be here long, right? Why would they target us in the "safe" suburbs?

And then I imagined how my Hispanic neighbors were feeling. I know if I were feeling this way, I could only imagine the utter terror they were experiencing.

My kids' schools followed "Safe and Secure" protocols. The first of its kind they've ever experienced. Elementary kids couldn't go out for recess on a perfectly comfortable weather day, for several days these past weeks, with little kids being shuffled quickly onto buses after school. They didn't tell the kids why.

A Latino dad showed up at the school parent pickup in his Army uniform to pick up his kindergartener.

I cried seeing him.

I knew why he wore that uniform to parent pick up. Wearing his US military uniform to school pick up was his best strategy to keep himself and his child safe that day.

When Everyday Life Stops Making Sense

My mind has been whirling these past few weeks:

How does anyone know what to do?
How to get through this?

How to go to work, how to parent your children, how to do anything considered “normal” anymore?

Where do I help? Where do I start?
What can I even do that would make a difference?

When government-sanctioned terror comes to your neighborhood, your gym, your workplace, or your child's school, no one is ready for how it feels, much less what to do about it. Reading The Diary of Anne Frank does not prepare you for this happening in our communities.

So, as a trauma therapist, I want to start by normalizing our human responses here.

What Happens Inside Our Bodies

Fear is an absolutely normal human response.

Panic is a normal human response.

Overwhelm and collapse are normal human responses.

Helplessness is a normal human feeling.

Rage is a normal human feeling.

Depression and hopelessness are normal human experiences.



So even if these are normal responses in the face of a dangerous crisis, the question that is on everyone's mind is: “What do we do”?

I think we need to back up a bit before answering it.

To begin to answer this question, I think a lot depends on who “we” are. “We” are not targeted equally in the eyes of the powerful, so the answers must be different to the question of “what do we do?”

For Folks of Color: Survival Is the Goal

Freeze, fight, flight, and collapse are all normal survival responses.

- 1 Feed yourself even if you're not hungry.
- 2 Sleep when you can.
- 3 Find safe touch, safe people, safe laughter.
- 4 Survival is enough for now.

For White Folks: If You Are Safe Enough, Fight

If your family is not in imminent danger, you are safe enough to fight.

- 1 Don't hide. Don't freeze.
Don't scroll yourself into paralysis.
- 2 Show up. Speak up.
Protect your neighbors.
- 3 Fight within your capacity.

How to Fight Within Your Capacity

Be willing to show up where others are fighting in your neighborhood. Fight with your voice (do you talk about this with friends/family/coworkers? If you don't, then start.)

Fight with your presence at protests. Fight with cooked meals, with our volunteering to walk targeted children home from school, and with our phone calls to our elected officials.

White people: do not let overwhelm overtake you when you are perfectly safe.

We must not collapse, flee, fawn, or freeze.

We must fight.

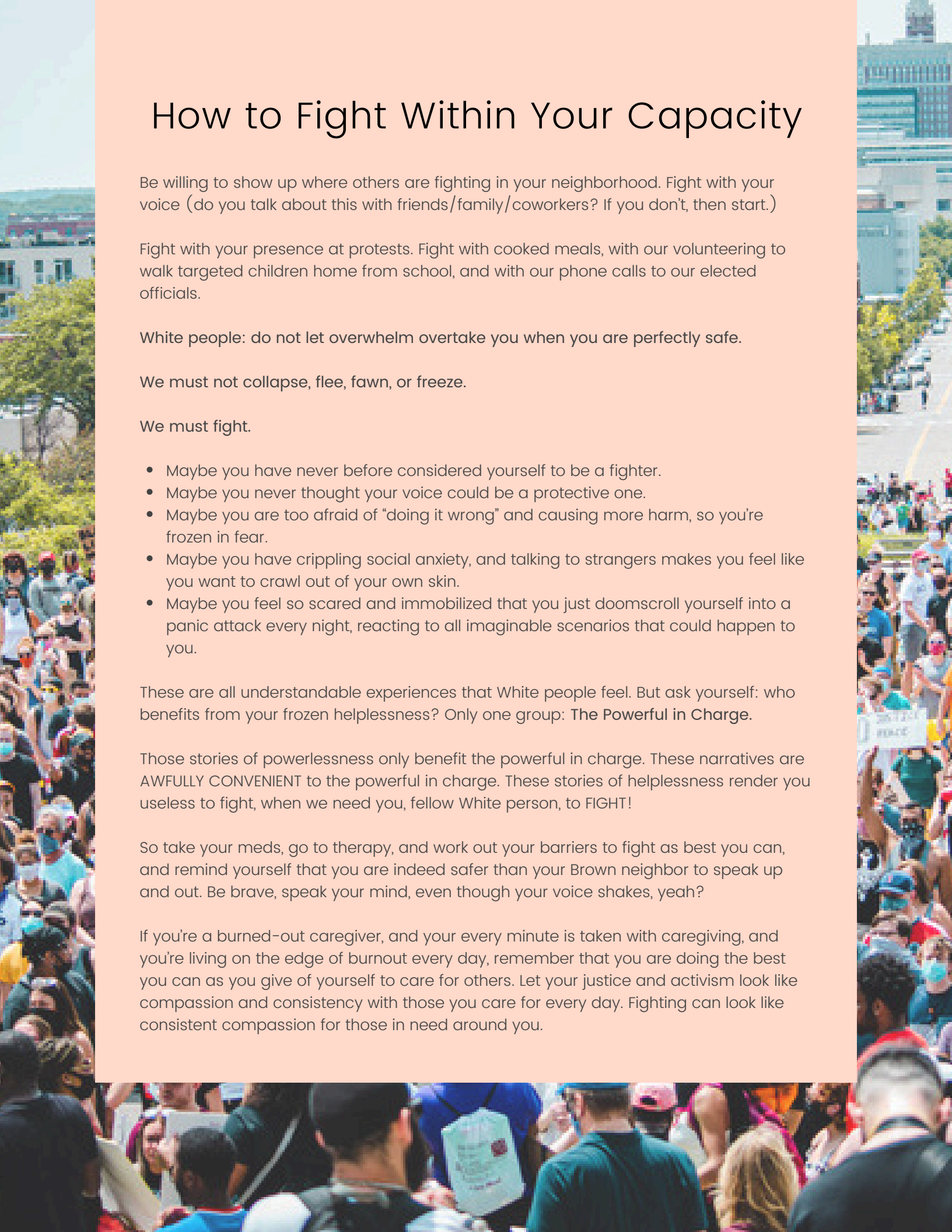
- Maybe you have never before considered yourself to be a fighter.
- Maybe you never thought your voice could be a protective one.
- Maybe you are too afraid of “doing it wrong” and causing more harm, so you’re frozen in fear.
- Maybe you have crippling social anxiety, and talking to strangers makes you feel like you want to crawl out of your own skin.
- Maybe you feel so scared and immobilized that you just doomscroll yourself into a panic attack every night, reacting to all imaginable scenarios that could happen to you.

These are all understandable experiences that White people feel. But ask yourself: who benefits from your frozen helplessness? Only one group: **The Powerful in Charge.**

Those stories of powerlessness only benefit the powerful in charge. These narratives are **AWFULLY CONVENIENT** to the powerful in charge. These stories of helplessness render you useless to fight, when we need you, fellow White person, to **FIGHT!**

So take your meds, go to therapy, and work out your barriers to fight as best you can, and remind yourself that you are indeed safer than your Brown neighbor to speak up and out. Be brave, speak your mind, even though your voice shakes, yeah?

If you're a burned-out caregiver, and your every minute is taken with caregiving, and you're living on the edge of burnout every day, remember that you are doing the best you can as you give of yourself to care for others. Let your justice and activism look like compassion and consistency with those you care for every day. Fighting can look like consistent compassion for those in need around you.



Reclaiming Our Humanity

Let us all collectively acknowledge that while this is not normal, it has been far too normal for people of color to feel afraid of our government. Racist public policy has been the horrific American legacy that now threatens to take everyone's freedoms, not just those of people of color.

But in 2025, if we get angry enough, if we fight effectively enough, we White people might just get it right this time.

Our children need to watch us fight this racist hate and terror so this never, ever happens again.

Pace yourself; your body only experiences the here and now. Go drink some water, eat a snack. Notice how reading this article affects your body, even at this very moment. You may notice flight, freeze, fight responses from these words. Respond to your body with compassion and acknowledge the truth of your inner experience. This awareness is where you start.

You're not alone; it's time to join others in the fight.

To those most at risk: your existence is resistance. Rest when you can, rage when you must, and trust that others are rising beside you.



About the Author

Priscilla Dean, LCPC Evergreen Counseling, Wheaton, IL

Priscilla Dean is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and Transforming Touch Practitioner who brings a compassionate yet courageous approach to her work with women navigating today's complex world.

Priscilla is known for challenging the narratives that keep us stuck, inviting clients and communities alike to engage with hard topics so we can learn, grow, and rewire the ways we think, feel, and live.

Her clinical work centers on collaboration, partnering with dietitians, psychiatrists, and primary care providers to ensure holistic, integrative care. She also incorporates the Enneagram into her therapeutic practice, helping clients deepen self-awareness, rediscover connection, and cultivate meaningful, lasting change.

Learn more about Priscilla and her practice at evergreencounseling.co

MENTAL HEALTH



CONNECTING THE GAPS IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

By Chandni Parikh, PMHNP, CPNP
Collaborative Counseling and Psychiatry

What Is a PMHNP?

Have you ever found yourself wondering, “What does PMHNP stand for?”

At The Center of Collaborative Counseling and Psychiatry, our care team includes three PMHNPs, short for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners.

As more people seek out mental health support, PMHNPs play a vital role in bridging the gap between therapy and psychiatry. We’re trained to assess, diagnose, and discuss the role of medication in supporting emotional well-being. And we do so through a compassionate, collaborative lens.

Beyond Prescriptions: How PMHNPs Bring Healing into Focus

PMHNPs begin with both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in nursing, followed by specialized clinical training in mental health. Our education includes hands-on experience across multiple settings, helping us see the whole person, not just the symptoms.

Here in Illinois, PMHNPs are licensed to observe, evaluate, and support clients with insight into both therapy and medication options. Our goal is to minimize mental-health symptoms while helping you feel seen, understood, and empowered in your care plan.

Understanding the Role of PMHNPs and Why Their Care Feels Different

As prescribers, we can recommend and monitor medications that may support your mental health journey. But our nursing foundation means we also look at the bigger picture – your stressors, daily routines, and environment.

In other words, our approach is holistic and wellness-based, blending science and empathy to help you find balance in both mind and body.



Holistic Mental Health Support Starts Here

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. PMHNPs work closely with therapists, primary-care physicians, and other specialists to ensure every aspect of your health is considered.

In Illinois, PMHNPs begin practice under the guidance of a collaborative physician but are later able to work independently, providing ongoing, personalized care for their own clients.

If you're exploring whether medication might be part of your healing journey, we'd love to meet you. Schedule an appointment with one of our PMHNPs at our St. Charles or Algonquin offices by calling 847-440-2281.



About the Author

Chandni Parikh, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner & Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

For Chandni, healing starts with understanding the whole person—not just the diagnosis.

She helps children, teens, and adults explore the stories behind their symptoms, uncovering how stress, trauma, and life transitions can shape mental health. With a background in both pediatrics and psychiatry, Chandni believes in the power of family collaboration and a supportive, nonjudgmental approach.

A graduate of Johns Hopkins and Columbia University, she brings warmth, clinical expertise, and genuine curiosity to every session. Outside of the office, you'll find her traveling, dining out, and making memories with her husband and two sons.



Collaborative Counseling and Psychiatry

Based in St. Charles and Algonquin, Collaborative Counseling & Psychiatry is where compassion meets science. Their team works with children, teens, and adults to uncover the roots of emotional challenges and find sustainable paths toward healing, balance, and connection. Learn more at collaborative4you.com or reach out directly at 847-440-2281 or contact@collaborative4you.com



MDW Cares

MDW Cares is a mutual aid network for women navigating life's many transitions, from motherhood to career shifts to divorce and beyond. We connect you with trusted local resources and community support so you don't have to walk the journey alone.

The following pages highlight support groups and therapists with immediate openings to help you find care when you need it most.

HOW AI IS SHAPING OUR MENTAL HEALTH IN TODAY'S WORLD

Artificial intelligence, or AI, has quietly become part of our daily lives. It helps us manage our schedules, find information, support us through tough times, and even anchor our emotional well-being when we feel we need it most. Many people now turn to AI for guidance and connection. It is fascinating to see how this technology can both help and challenge our mental health.

Like many things that bring change, AI carries both positives and negatives.

On the positive side, AI has made mental health support more accessible than ever before. For people who feel hesitant to reach out for help, technology can offer a gentle first step.

Mindfulness and journaling apps or virtual mental health tools can provide comfort and skills to use in difficult moments. While these resources do not replace therapy, they can help people feel less alone and encourage them to explore their emotions more deeply.

AI can also help us notice patterns in our behaviors that might otherwise have gone unseen. Subtle changes in sleep, energy, or mood can sometimes signal that something is off. When used thoughtfully, technology can help people recognize these patterns early and seek support before challenges become overwhelming.

However, as much as AI can help, it can also create distance from genuine human connection.





While AI can simulate understanding, it cannot truly feel empathy or compassion. Real healing often comes from being seen and heard by another person. When technology begins to take the place of authentic interaction, it can deepen feelings of isolation and loneliness.

There are also important concerns about privacy and accuracy.

Some AI tools offer advice that is not based on sound clinical research, and many collect sensitive personal information. When we are uncertain about how our data is used or stored, it can add an extra layer of worry rather than providing peace of mind.

Another challenge comes from how AI shapes the way we see ourselves.

Algorithms often show us filtered images and idealized lifestyles that can make us feel as though we are falling behind. Constant comparison to unrealistic standards can quietly erode confidence and increase stress, especially when we start to believe that everyone else has life figured out.

AI itself is not inherently good or bad. It reflects how we choose to use it.

When approached with mindfulness and care, AI can be a helpful companion that supports mental wellness and encourages self-reflection. Yet it is important to remember that true healing and growth come from something deeply human. Empathy, connection, and presence remain at the heart of what it means to care for our mental health.

As technology continues to grow, we can find balance by using AI to enhance rather than replace our relationships and our inner awareness. Let it serve as a tool for insight and support, while we continue to rely on the power of human understanding and connection.

At Ellie Mental Health, we believe that meaningful healing begins with real relationships and compassionate care. If you would like to explore how technology fits into your mental health journey, or simply want a safe space to reconnect with yourself, our therapists are here to support you.

Reach out today to schedule a session and take the next step toward balance and well-being by calling 630-491-6846 or emailing EllieL08101@elliementalhealth.com

About the Author:

Lovey Kaur is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with extensive experience addressing teen dating violence and the unique relationship challenges within South Asian cultural contexts.

As a member of the MDW Mental Health Advisory Board, she focuses on helping individuals untangle the complexities of relationships while navigating anxiety, depression, or major life changes.

Lovey believes good mental health creates a ripple effect, strengthening confidence, decision-making, and overall well-being.



RESOURCE

Emotional regulation is a skill many of us were never taught, yet it's essential for navigating daily life.

Our free guide introduces the "Notice, Name, Normalize" technique, a simple, effective way to build self-awareness and manage emotions with more ease.

You'll also learn how sensory processing and overload can impact your ability to stay grounded, especially for women carrying invisible emotional loads.

the modern
**domestic
woman**



Download the full guide to unpack the Notice, Name, Normalize technique and add this strategy to your mental health toolkit.

USING 'NOTICE, NAME, NORMALIZE'
TO NAVIGATE STRESS AND
SENSORY OVERLOAD



MDW FREE DOWNLOAD





MANAGING *my feelings*



The “Notice, Name, Normalize” technique effectively manages emotions and enhances self-awareness. Together, these steps can empower you to confront your feelings constructively, making it easier to respond rather than react. Over time, this technique can lead to greater emotional resilience and a healthier relationship with your feelings.

NOTICE

Do a body scan or breathing exercise to become aware of your mental & physical state.

Reflect on the thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations you are experiencing.

Write out your thoughts and how your body is feeling:

NAME

Next, name/identify how you are feeling by simply saying, “I’m facing a stressful moment and this is difficult.”

Acknowledge it without judging yourself.

Identify how you are feeling below:

NORMALIZE

Now, recognize what you’re feeling is part of being human.

Imagine that you are talking to a good friend about the same feeling. What would you say to them?

Write down what you would say to a good friend in this situation:

UPCOMING EVENTS

Rebuilding
your life
after divorce.

An empowering evening for all genders
designed to help you reclaim your future,
rebuild with clarity, and move forward
with confidence.

Nov. 6th, 2025

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

The Victorian Fox
St. Charles, IL



free event but
registration is required!

WHISKEY, WINGS & REAL TALK

Men's
Group

THE TOPIC:
Tools and takeaways for
handling holiday stress
before it handles you.

with therapist
Jeremy Tovmassian



NOV. 11 | 6-8 PM
THE LEWIS, ST. CHARLES

Join in on a variety of events
hosted by MDW and
our partners.

Questions? Message us at
hello.mdwcares@gmail.com

Invested In Her

*A woman's Guide to
Financial Freedom*

JAN 24
6pm-8pm

REALTOR ASSOCIATION FOX VALLEY
406 SURREY WOODS DRIVE
ST. CHARLES

IMAGINE A SPACE WHERE
WOMEN FROM ALL WALKS OF
LIFE COME TOGETHER TO LEARN
AND GROW FINANCIALLY
REGISTRATION REQUIRED



Free Event
Sponsored By:

Guest Speakers

ESTHER RAYDES
FINANCIAL ADVISOR

ZOE SHERWIN
REALTOR

NATALIE MATTHEW
VP OF MORTGAGE

ELIZABETH RAGO
FOUNDER OF MDW

HARMONY
EQUUM ESTATES

the modern
domestic
woman

Home Loans
NMLS 1667764

KW INSPIRE
KELLER WILLIAMS
REALTOR

QUESTIONS? CONTACT ZOE: 331.425.1181



Therapists with Immediate Openings



Razan Masri, ALMFT – Downers Grove, IL

Razan Masri is a compassionate therapist who blends warmth and evidence-based care to help individuals and couples create meaningful change. With a special focus on multicultural and bicultural clients, she guides people toward greater self-awareness, emotional balance, and healthier relationships built on trust and understanding.

Solid Foundations Therapy
4932 Main St, Downers Grove, IL

Info@solidfoundationstherapy.com
630-633-8532
solidfoundationstherapy.com



Lauren Logsdon, MS – Wheaton, IL

Lauren is a master's-level clinician who believes in the transformative power of being truly seen and heard. With warmth, empathy, and a creative spirit, they create a space where clients can explore their genuine selves without judgment. Lauren's approach blends human connection and playfulness to help people embrace their differences, find healing, and rediscover what makes them "more than good enough."

Evergreen Counseling
2100 Manchester Rd, Suite 610, Wheaton, IL

Reach out: Complete the contact form at evergreencounseling.co/contact
630-480-0060
evergreencounseling.co



Mandy Palermo, APRN, PMHNP – St. Charles, IL

Mandy Palermo is a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner who brings heart, experience, and calm to every patient she meets. After years on the front lines as an EMT and emergency department nurse, she saw firsthand how deeply physical and mental health are connected and made it her mission to care for both. Known for her approachable style and holistic mindset, Mandy helps individuals find steadier ground through compassionate, collaborative care that honors the whole person.

Collaborative Counseling and Psychiatry
2210 Dean Street, Unit D, Saint Charles, IL

contact@collaborative4you.com
847-440-2281
collaborative4you.com



From One Woman's Story to a Shared Mission

At its heart, MDW Cares is about turning lived experience into lasting impact.

"What started as survival has become service," says Elizabeth. "MDW Cares is the tangible extension of what The Modern Domestic Woman has always stood for, showing up for each other with compassion, courage, and care."

From workshops and magazine stories to one-on-one support and community partnerships, MDW Cares is growing into a movement of women helping women, right here, right now.

Get Involved

Follow along as MDW Cares continues to grow and connect women across our community.

Visit mdwcares.com

Follow us on social
@themoderndomesticwoman



Donate



RELATIONSHIPS



NAVIGATING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONSHIPS

When two people come from different cultural backgrounds, their relationship can become a beautiful blend of traditions, foods, perspectives, and stories. But as Razan Masri, ALMFT, of Solid Foundations Therapy reminds us, it can also bring unique challenges that aren't always easy to name.

"Dating and intimacy across cultures adds richness," Razan shares, "but it can also reveal differences in expectations around gender roles, emotional expression, and family involvement." In some families, dating is a private, independent experience; in others, parents and extended relatives play an active role in decisions. These differences don't mean the relationship can't work, they simply invite intentional conversation.

1. Open the Dialogue

Razan encourages partners to talk openly about values and expectations rather than assuming alignment. A simple check-in like "How do you see family involvement in our relationship?" can open the door to deeper understanding.

2. Lead with Curiosity

When differences surface, replace judgment with curiosity. Razan suggests asking your partner, "Can you tell me more about why this is important to you?"

Curiosity transforms potential conflict into connection, reminding both partners that their cultural identities are something to learn from, not fight against.





3. Make Values-Based Decisions

At the heart of every healthy relationship lies shared values like respect, honesty, commitment, and kindness. When partners focus on these guiding principles, cultural differences become opportunities to build a relationship that honors both backgrounds.

Finding Strength in Difference

Razan believes that what can feel like a divide often becomes a bridge. With openness, curiosity, and shared purpose, cultural contrasts don't have to be barriers; they can be the very strengths that bring couples closer together.

And if those conversations ever feel difficult to navigate alone, therapy offers a supportive space to explore them. "Reaching out for support can make the process feel less overwhelming and more empowering," Razan says.

About the Therapist:

Razan Masri, ALMFT

Associate Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Solid Foundations Therapy, Downers Grove

Razan Masri combines warmth, empathy, and evidence-based care to help individuals and couples create meaningful, lasting change. She believes therapy is a collaborative process, one built on trust, curiosity, and honest conversation. Known for her calm presence and ability to make clients feel seen and understood, Razan guides people toward greater self-awareness, emotional balance, and connection.

Drawing from her own bicultural background, Razan has a special passion for working with multicultural and bicultural clients navigating identity, belonging, and relationship dynamics. Her approach is holistic and goal-oriented, integrating practical tools that help clients manage emotions, strengthen communication, and build healthier relationships grounded in mutual respect and understanding.

To schedule an appointment with Razan, email Info@solidfoundationstherapy.com



solidfoundationstherapy.com



PARENTING





FINALLY, A PARENTING SPACE THAT GETS NEURODIVERGENT FAMILIES.

Parenting looks different when your family is neurodivergent, and that difference deserves to be seen, supported, and celebrated.

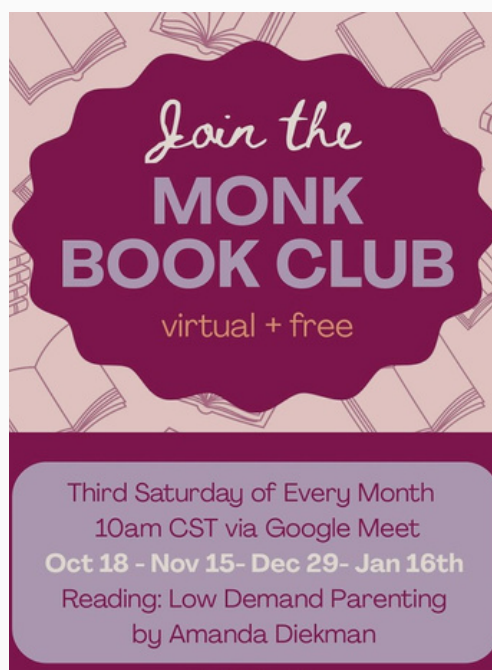
That's the heart behind Neurodivergent Family Guide, a community founded by Amanda Losch, a therapist and stay-at-home mom raising a neurodivergent family of her own.

Amanda knows firsthand that while love for our kids is universal, the path to supporting them often looks and feels different for parents navigating ADHD, autism, sensory needs, anxiety, and more.

She created Neurodivergent Family Guide as a place where those differences aren't just accepted, they're understood, validated, and met with practical tools and care.

Through her work, Amanda blends her background in mental health with her lived experience as a mom, creating content and community events that meet families exactly where they are.

Her mission is simple yet powerful: to make support accessible for every parent who needs it, not hidden behind paywalls, waitlists, or judgment.



TOOLS & TOGETHERNESS FOR EVERY FAMILY JOURNEY

The community offers a wide range of resources designed to meet the needs of both parents and children, including:

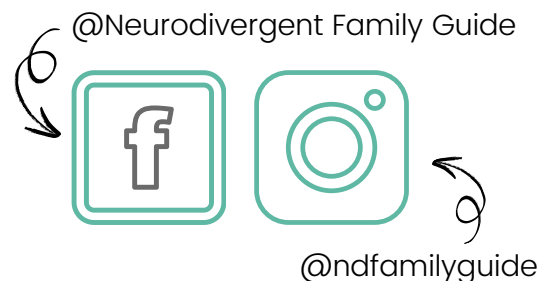
- Support group suggestions for those looking to connect in person or online
- A monthly book club exploring topics like neurodiversity, parenting, and self-compassion
- In-person events such as yoga classes created specifically for parents of neurodivergent kids, allowing for spaces to breathe, move, and reconnect with themselves
- Support for neurodivergent parents, who often balance caregiving with their own sensory and emotional needs



Amanda is also at
@complex.motherhood on Insta

Neurodivergent Family Guide isn't about perfection or prescriptive parenting advice, it's about community care, shared wisdom, and small moments of understanding that make a hard day feel lighter. Whether you're new to the journey or years in, Amanda's approach reminds parents that they don't have to do it alone.

You can follow and connect with Amanda at Neurodivergent Family Guide on Facebook and Instagram, where she shares relatable stories, gentle education, and local resources designed to empower neurodivergent families to thrive together.



PLAYFUL



Your little explorer will be cozy in this Woodland Organic Cotton Set, where softness meets storybook sweetness.

The oversized terry top features a playful woodland animal print, paired with ribbed bamboo-cotton bottoms made for wiggles, naps, and everyday adventures.

Gentle on their skin and kind to the planet, it's the perfect blend of comfort, sustainability, and whimsy.

Woodland Organic Cotton Set

ARLO.HENDRIX



HOME



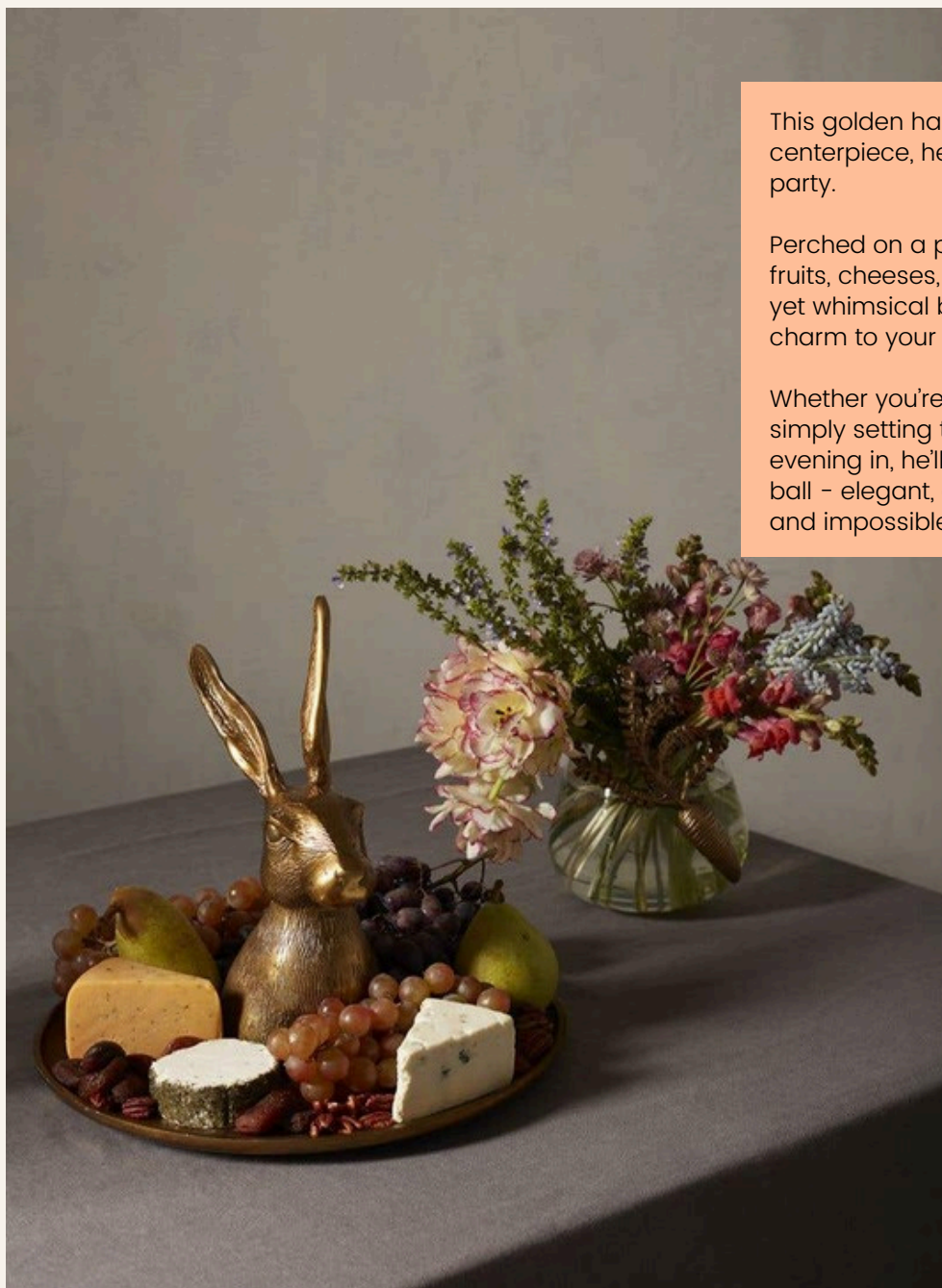
TEALIGHT



Tealite with Handle
ANTLERS AND ROSÉ



PLATTER



This golden hare is no ordinary centerpiece, he's the life of the party.

Perched on a platter surrounded by fruits, cheeses, and nuts, this stately yet whimsical bunny brings instant charm to your table.

Whether you're hosting a dinner or simply setting the mood for a cozy evening in, he'll be the belle of the ball - elegant, a little mischievous, and impossible to ignore.

Rabbit Antique Gold Platter

THE PEP LINE



CRUET

We couldn't resist including this Kingfisher Soy Sauce Dispenser, a playful yet elegant piece of Arita Ware that brings both beauty and meaning to the table.

Hand-painted in vibrant turquoise and warm orange tones, the kingfisher (a symbol of harmony and good fortune in Japan) adds a touch of joy to every meal. With its drip-free spout and perfectly balanced design, it's as practical as it is artful.

A little reminder that even everyday moments can feel special.



Kingfisher Soy Sauce Dispenser

JOC GOODS





HOMEMADE PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE

By Katie McCall

Call me basic, but I'm definitely a PSL kinda gal. Yet, when I did a bit of research, I was grossed out by the excess sugar and "gloop" found in most commercial chain lattes. So, last year, I developed this recipe to create a warming, cozy PSL any time I wanted, with a lot less sugar and REAL pumpkin - imagine that!

The idea here is to create a cooked down pumpkin purée that's loaded with all of our favorite seasonal spices like clove, cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg, plus cardamom for a twist. You then add this to your prepared espresso (or very strong coffee), simple syrup to sweeten and frothed milk of choice. A final dollop of fresh whipped cream and sprinkle of spices makes for an ultimately decadent finish.

Cheers to fall!

- Katie

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (15oz) can pumpkin purée
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground clove
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 double shot espresso
- 3/4 cup milk of choice
- Simple syrup: 1/2 cup granulated sugar + 1/2 cup water



METHOD

In a small saucepan, combine the pumpkin, spices and vanilla. Cook over medium to medium-high heat for about 10 minutes, stirring regularly, allowing the moisture in the pumpkin to evaporate.

As the purée thickens and cooks down, the natural flavor of the pumpkin will become stronger and condensed. Once cooked and cooled, transfer to a storage jar (I like Weck and Ball Jars) and set aside.

To make the simple syrup: combine the sugar and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, allowing the sugar to dissolve completely. Cook a few minutes until it begins to thicken just slightly. Remove from heat, pour into storage jar and set aside.

To assemble: grab your favorite mug and add about 2 tablespoons of the pumpkin purée + 2 tablespoons of the simple syrup. Stir and set aside. Please note – these proportions can be adjusted to your own taste preference.

Lastly, brew espresso (or coffee) and pour into mug. Stir until well combined. Warm milk on the stove, froth with a frothing wand until foamy, and then pour over the purée mixture, saving a bit of foam to garnish the top. Give it a good stir and enjoy, or top with fresh whipped cream and an additional sprinkle of cinnamon.

About the Author:

Katie McCall is a Midwestern girl with a deep love for nature, food, and family. Raised in the rural suburbs of Chicago, she spent her childhood foraging for morel mushrooms, picking green beans, and exploring the outdoors. This connection to nature continues to inspire her work and lifestyle.

After earning a B.S. in Journalism from the University of Illinois, Katie moved to Chicago to pursue food writing. She later attended Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts to further her culinary skills, and eventually co-founded Two Wild Seeds, a gluten-free bakery she ran with her mom in St. Charles, Illinois. Though the bakery closed in 2021, Katie continues to freelance and share her passion for food.



Outside of writing and cooking, Katie enjoys living a self-sustaining lifestyle, gardening, decorating her 1905 farmhouse, and discovering new treasures at local farmers' markets and antique shops. Always in search of new ways to create, Katie is passionate about making life as delicious and fulfilling as possible.

PHASES



We're a little starry-eyed over this 2026 Lunar Calendar Print. A hand-painted work of art that beautifully blends astronomy, astrology, and artistry.

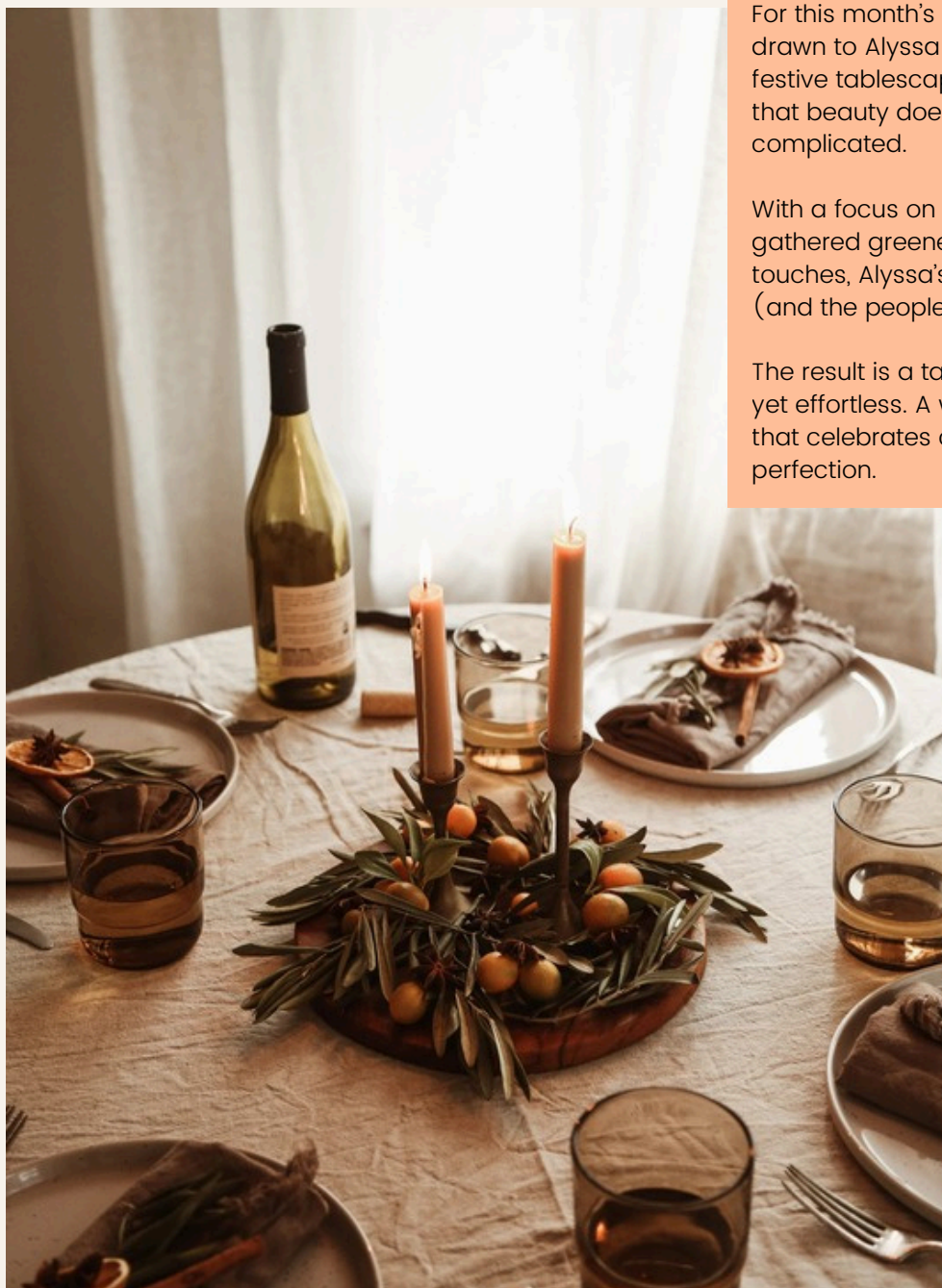
Designed in Cornwall, UK, it maps every moon phase, zodiac shift, and celestial event in stunning detail, helping you live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. Printed on FSC-certified paper, it's both educational and enchanting.

A cosmic companion for your wall and your year.

2026 | Large Moon Calendar
MOON PHASE STUDIOS



INSPO



For this month's table inspiration, we're drawn to Alyssa Ponticello's foraged and festive tablescape. A perfect reminder that beauty doesn't have to be complicated.

With a focus on natural textures, gathered greenery, and simple rustic touches, Alyssa's approach lets the food (and the people) take center stage.

The result is a table that feels elevated yet effortless. A warm, welcoming setting that celebrates connection over perfection.

Fall Tablescape

ALYSSA PONTICELLO // IN GOOD TASTE



DIY



This clever DIY by Christine Britton turns yesterday's news into today's table decor.

By painting and folding old newspaper into fall leaves, you can create a whimsical, eco-friendly accent for your Thanksgiving table, or even string them into a charming swag above your spread with a few sprigs of florals.

Simple, sustainable, and beautifully seasonal.

Thanksgiving Table DIY

CHRISTINE BRITTON



about **the modern domestic woman**

Supporting women from all walks of life.

At The Modern Domestic Woman (MDW), we are committed to addressing the holistic needs of women and recognizing the challenges they face in various aspects of life. Our vision is to create a nurturing environment where every woman feels supported and encouraged to thrive, regardless of their circumstances. Through our workshops and resource-sharing initiatives, MDW equips women with the tools and knowledge they need to overcome challenges and pursue their goals with confidence. We believe in providing practical resources tailored to women's needs, ensuring that they have access to essential support services.

MDW focuses on 3 pillars of living:

MENTAL HEALTH - MDW Cares is our support community of women rooted in making mental health a priority instead of an afterthought. Because nobody can pour from an empty cup.

LIFESTYLE - MDW loves creating safe spaces; at home and in the body you call home. We encourage a healthy lifestyle that meets you where you're at. Not where someone else wants you to be. We also love pretty things at MDW and celebrate style and the artistry of creatives.

ADVOCACY - At MDW, we go out into our communities and support women in crisis. We actively partner with organizations that support the rights, recovery, and well-being of women.

Beyond referrals, MDW has free support groups and community education workshops, and an informative and fun blog with free downloadable resources.

For more information, visit mdwcares.com or follow MDW on your favorite social platform @themoderndomesticwoman

Have a question or need a referral? Email us at themoderndomesticwoman@gmail.com



PARTNER

A MAGAZINE WORTH SAVORING & SAVING

A 65+ page, full-color MDW magazine packed with mental health resources, local recs, and soulful lifestyle inspo. Plus a thoughtful free gift every issue.

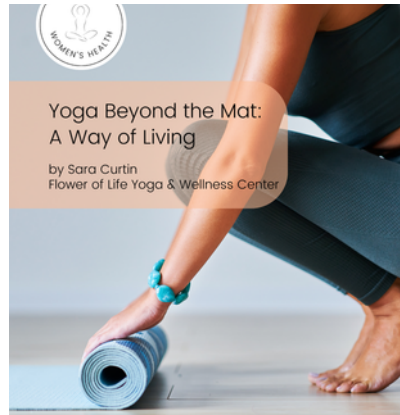
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- \$65/6 months
- \$120/1 year

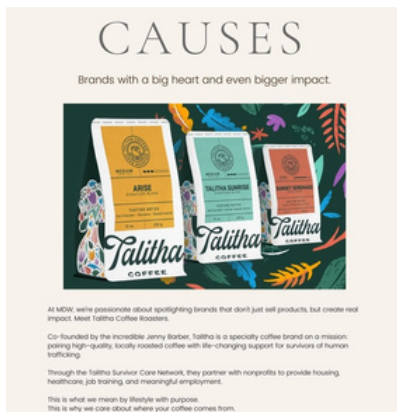
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Accessible rates (\$50-\$350) with options from quarter-page ads to full sponsor features (article, gift inclusion, socials).

Email

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