



the modern domestic woman

SEPTEMBER 2025
MINI MAG

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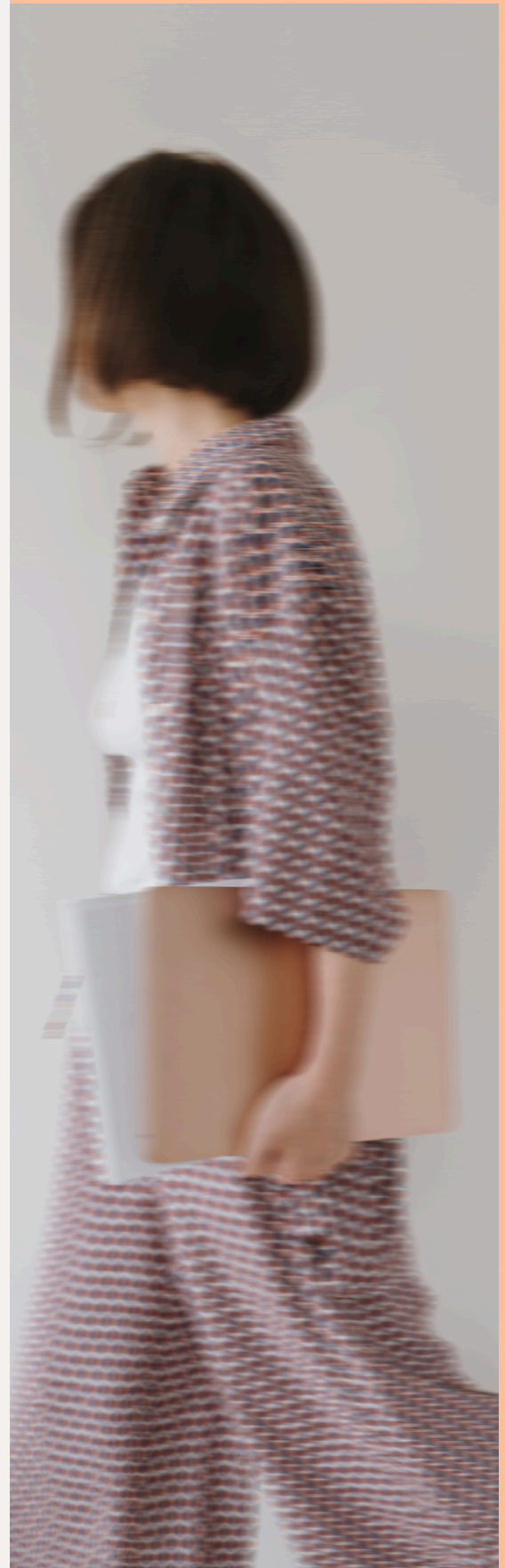
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We all want a space to land that's cozy and uniquely ours. It's not perfect, but it is full of all the lovely things that make it home.



September 2025 MINI MAG

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear MDW Family,

As the air shifts and September settles in, I feel that familiar spark of energy that comes when summer's long days begin to fade. By this point, I'm weary of the heat and ready to pull out the blankets, fire up the slow cooker, and lean into all things cozy.

Fall, for me, feels like a reset. A reminder that fresh routines and quiet comforts can ground us as we head into a new season.

At MDW, we know transitions matter. Just like the seasons, the chapters in women's lives bring both beauty and challenge.

That's why we're different: we're not just publishing pretty pages - we're building a high-trust community of women who show up because they know this space is rooted in honesty, care, and connection.

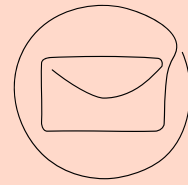
Our community isn't about clicks or algorithms; it's about resonance, word-of-mouth referrals, shared stories, and the kind of trust you can't fake.

Here, every product, story, and reflection is chosen with intention. Whether you're navigating a new career path, a shift in your family life, or just the changing of the seasons, MDW is about meeting you where you are with warmth, advocacy, and a few little luxuries to make the hard days softer.

So, as you flip through this September issue, pour yourself something warm, wrap up in that favorite sweater, and take a moment just for you. You've earned it.

Wishing you all the cozy vibes.

Elizabeth Rago
MDW Founder & Editor



Subscribe to the MDW newsletter and get a chance to win one of the items featured in this month's mini mag! Just tap the envelope icon above.



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

PS:

MDW gets a teensy commission if you click through and purchase via affiliate links, but don't worry, 100% of that kickback goes directly to supporting women's programs right here in our community. So, every purchase is a small act of kindness that adds up to something big!

— Profile



Meet Haley Schwartz

When you think of adaptive clothing, what comes to mind?

Functional but frumpy? Basic. Clinical. Designed for utility, not style.

Now, imagine a sleek black jumper with water-resistant pockets. A flattering silhouette that respects your body and your medical devices.

A piece so thoughtfully designed it can take you from a professional conference

to a retirement party and still make you feel like, as one customer put it, “a pretty girl again.”

That’s the magic of Vertige Adaptive, pronounced [Vér-tij], a fashion-forward brand that’s rewriting what it means to dress with dignity, choice, and confidence.

And behind it all is Haley Schwartz, a young founder whose story is as bold and resilient as the designs she creates.

A Health Journey That Became a Design Mission



At just four years old, Haley was diagnosed with a rare heart arrhythmia, Ventricular Tachycardia. While her tiny heart silently skipped and stuttered through the day, she was outwardly symptomless.

But the treatment?

A tangled mess of wires, itchy adhesives, bulky monitors, and self-conscious discomfort

"I hated it," she recalls. "The cords were long and would get tangled in my clothes. My pockets were too small, so I had to either carry the monitor around or tuck it into the waistband of my pants. The leads would fall off, so I taped them to my skin or wrapped a gauze bandage around my body to keep everything in place."

Overall, it was incredibly uncomfortable and made her feel very self-conscious. When she had the monitor on, she was so embarrassed that Haley didn't even want to leave her house.

However, the doctors needed to monitor her heart during my everyday activities, so even on hot days, Haley covered herself up with baggy clothes in an effort to hide it.

Years later, just before middle school, a head injury triggered Dysautonomia—an autonomic condition that caused frequent fainting.

If childhood wasn't challenging enough, now she was "the girl who passed out at school."

Teachers brushed her off and blamed her fainting on anxiety or an eating disorder, which wasn't the case at all. Peers treated her differently.

But instead of disappearing, Haley leaned into something that brought her joy: fashion.

"I started putting together outfits not to impress anyone, but to make the day a little more bearable. I noticed people treated me differently when I dressed up. Teachers became kinder. My peers stopped focusing on my health."

That realization—that fashion had power—planted the first seed of what would later become Vertige Adaptive.

From Sketch to Studio: Overcoming Industry Roadblocks

Haley had the designs. She had the vision. What she didn't have, at least at first, were the industry connections.

"My biggest challenge was finding the right manufacturers," she says. "Most factories won't work with you unless you already have some kind of relationship with them. And since I started this business right after graduating from college, I didn't have any."

But what Haley did have was grit and mentors who believed in her.

Thanks to a few generous introductions and a consultant who guided her through the entire process, she was able to navigate the maze of sourcing and production.

Even with help, it wasn't easy. Many manufacturers were hesitant to take on adaptive fashion, a still-new concept in an industry that often prioritizes speed over inclusivity.

"Not everyone was willing to put in the extra effort," she admits.

But those early challenges turned out to be a gift. Haley didn't just get her foot in the door; she gained a deep understanding of the entire supply chain, knowledge she now uses to advocate for better practices and more inclusive production standards within the industry.

Because Vertige Adaptive isn't just about beautiful clothes. It's about pushing fashion forward, on every level.



Molly Farrell in the Breeze Button-Up Dress

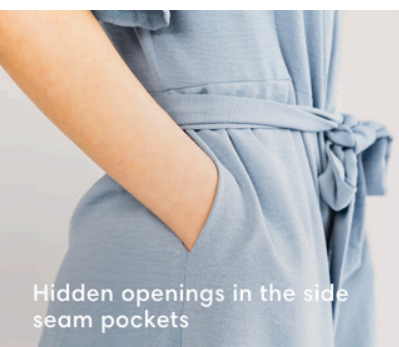
Gorgeous Design With Intention & Control

For Haley, fashion wasn't about hiding. It was about reclaiming identity in a world that constantly tried to reduce her to a diagnosis.

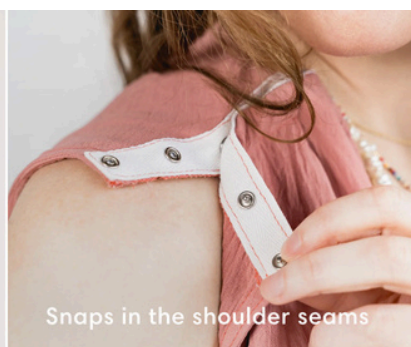
When she began designing professionally, her goal was clear: create clothes that look like they belong on the runway while also working with feeding tubes, ostomy bags, and heart monitors.

She designs with intentionality:

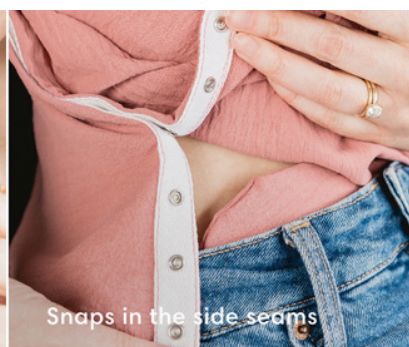
- Higher necklines for coverage without sacrificing style
- Fitted-but-relaxed silhouettes that flatter without restricting
- Interior water-resistant pockets to discreetly house devices
- Snap closures and zippers for easier dressing and device access



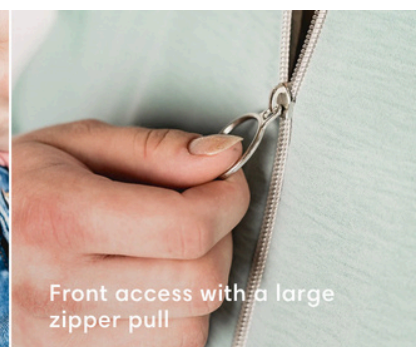
Hidden openings in the side seam pockets



Snaps in the shoulder seams



Snaps in the side seams



Front access with a large zipper pull

"I never want to create clothing that hides people's bodies," Haley says. "It's about giving women the choice to show or conceal. That's where the power is."

And she doesn't see adaptive features as limitations. She sees them as creative prompts. Each collection starts with free-flowing fashion sketches, and then she adapts them.

"That way, fashion is never an afterthought. It's the foundation."

Changing the Narrative — For Everyone

Vertige Adaptive isn't just for women with chronic conditions. And that's by design.

While Haley's lived experience fuels every stitch, she wants the brand to feel just as welcoming to someone who isn't navigating a diagnosis. Because true inclusivity means options for everyone—without forcing anyone into a box. That's why she's now shifting the way she talks about Vertige.

Instead of a brand for people with disabilities, she's reframing it as "a fashion-forward lifestyle brand for women of all abilities."

Two product lines. The same great styles. One with discreet adaptive features, one without.

"People without disabilities already have thousands of clothing options. So this shift isn't for them, it's for the women who need these designs to feel like themselves again."

And yes, non-disabled women are loving the functionality too. A friend once asked, "Is it weird if I buy this romper even though I don't need adaptive clothing?"

That's when Haley knew: adaptive doesn't mean 'only if.' It can mean 'for all.'

A Dress, A Feeding Tube, and One Powerful Review

It's one thing to have a vision. It's another to watch it change someone's life. One customer—a woman with a feeding tube—needed a dress last minute for a work trip. Haley rushed to make sure it shipped in time. Days later, she received a message that stopped her in her tracks.

"I purchased the Denim Convertible Jumper in Black for a professional conference I was attending for work. I have since worn it to a wake and a retirement party.

It allows me to dress it up or down and still use my feeding tube.

This little jumper makes me feel like a pretty girl again.

I miss being able to wear dresses and look forward to more fashion-forward designs from Vertige Adaptive."

"That part broke me," Haley shares. "Because at the end of the day, don't we all just want to feel confident in our bodies?"

For Young People Still Figuring It Out

To teens and young adults navigating chronic illness, Haley offers this:

"Your confidence isn't dependent on how others see you. Dress how you want. Show up how you need to. The people who get it will stick around."

Fashion can't cure a condition. But it can restore a sense of normalcy in a world that often forgets how much dignity matters.

And for Haley Schwartz and Vertige Adaptive, that's the whole point.



Where's Hailey Going From Here

Originally from the Chicago suburbs, Haley Schwartz now calls New York City home—a fitting backdrop for a designer rewriting the future of fashion.

She graduated with a degree in fashion design from the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. And since then, Haley has made her mark, winning the inaugural PETE Prize for Entrepreneurs in 2022.

The award came with startup funding and office space, just the launchpad she needed to turn Vertige Adaptive from vision into reality.

Now based in NYC, Haley is building a brand with national reach and personal impact—one thoughtfully designed piece at a time.

With new collections on the horizon and a growing community of customers, Haley isn't just designing clothes.

She's designing a movement.

Visit [vertigeadaptive.com](https://www.vertigeadaptive.com) to learn more and shop.



BREW

One cup. One change. One life at a time.

Meet Talitha Coffee

At MDW, we're passionate about spotlighting brands that don't just sell products, but create real impact.

Meet Talitha Coffee Roasters. Co-founded by the incredible Jenny Barber, Talitha is a specialty coffee brand on a mission: pairing high-quality, locally roasted coffee with life-changing support for survivors of human trafficking.

Through the Talitha Survivor Care Network, they partner with nonprofits to provide housing, healthcare, job training, and meaningful employment.



How you can help:



Buy the beans

Every purchase funds survivor support services & employment opportunities. *(If you're not a coffee drinker, why not add bags of ground coffee to your gift baskets!)*



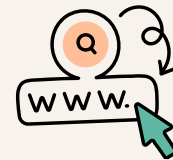
Share the story

Spread the word about Talitha's mission and help raise awareness about trafficking in our communities.



Become a wholesaler

If you're a coffee shop, restaurant, church, or retailer looking to offer exceptional coffee, you can join Talitha's growing wholesale network. *(Know an amazing business who serves or sells coffee? Share talitha.com with them!)*



Even your morning coffee can be an act of advocacy, compassion, and empowerment.



LIFESTYLE



SOCKS



Effortlessly cheerful, these crew-length trouser socks bring a pop of floral flair to brighten up any outfit.

With a reinforced toe and heel, they're as practical as they are pretty.

Like a little burst of happiness for your feet.

Floral Jacquard Trouser Socks

FREE PEOPLE



COAT



This sleeveless coat in rich teal brings effortless sophistication with its relaxed, tailored silhouette and luxe softness you'll want to live in.

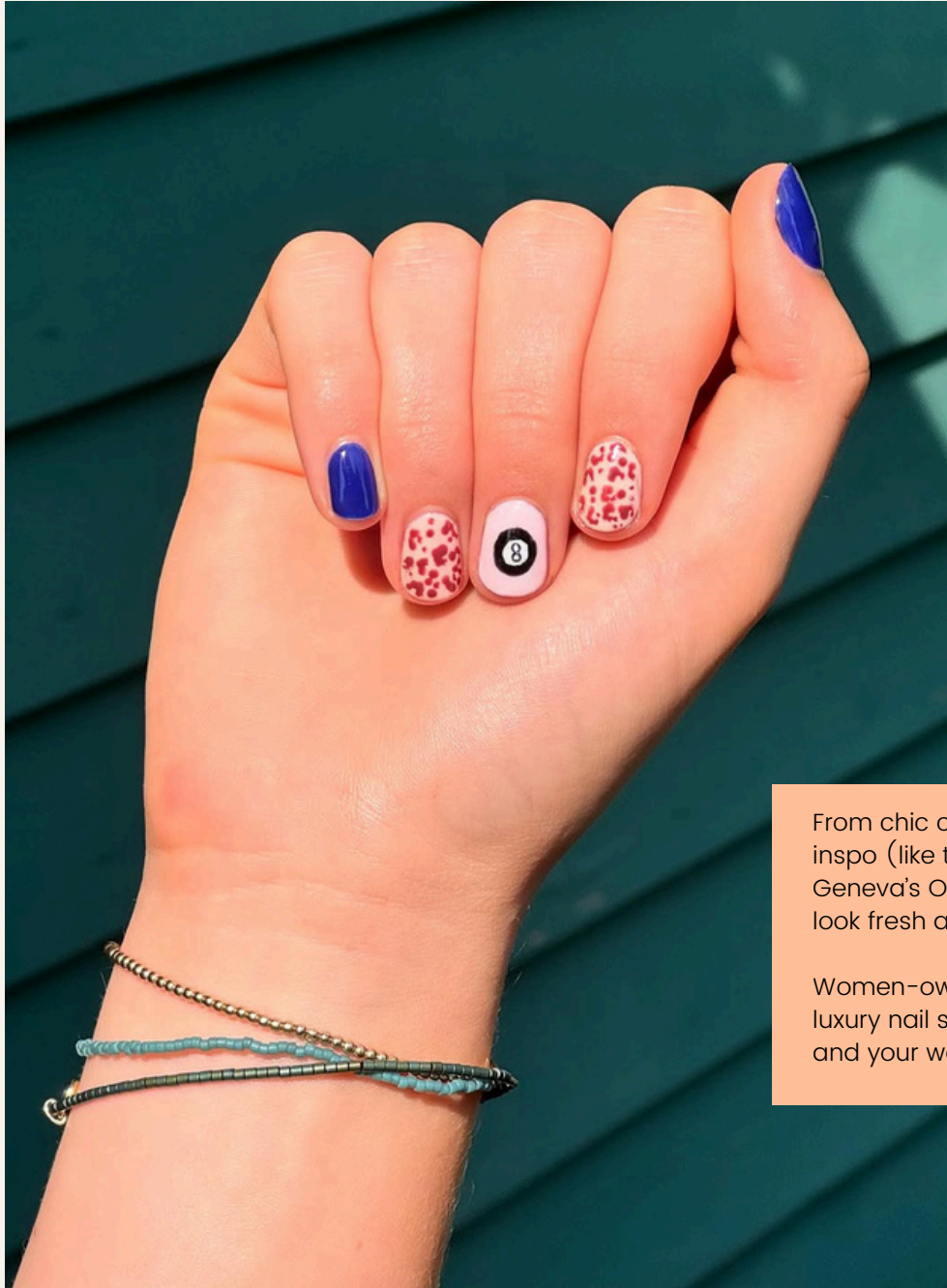
Perfectly versatile, it layers just as beautifully over a mock neck and trousers for work as it does over a hoodie and jeans for a polished casual vibe.

Wina Gillet Coat

HOUSE OF 423



NAILS



From chic classics to creative inspo (like these 8-ball nails!), Geneva's On Point Nails keeps your look fresh and healthy.

Women-owned and operated, this luxury nail spa puts your style, and your well-being, first.

On Point Nails

GENEVA, IL



Fall Outings

Camping Essentials

As fall settles into the Midwest, the crisp air and fiery colors call us to pack up and head out for epic camping trips under the changing leaves. To make your autumn adventures cozy, practical, and a little magical, we've rounded up a couple of camping essentials you'll be glad you brought along.

01



Bear Buddy Double Chair by Kuma



This cozy two-seat camp chair, built with a sturdy steel frame and weather-ready materials, offers padded comfort, dual cup holders, and the perfect spot to relax together by the campfire.

Classic Kettle 1.8 by Snow Peak



The Classic Kettle is a polished stainless steel essential built for both the campfire and your kitchen. With a 1.8L capacity, sturdy handle, locking spout cover, and hanger loop, it makes brewing tea or coffee simple wherever you are. Pair it with the Collapsible Coffee Drip for the perfect pour-over, whether you're in the great outdoors or at home.

02



HOW UGLY SOCKS HELPED ME FIND MYSELF AFTER DIVORCE

by Carrie Summers



When my marriage ended, I wasn't devastated; I was exhausted. I had spent so much time trying to be everything for someone else that I lost sight of myself in the process. By the time it was over, I wasn't mourning the relationship; I was mourning the version of me that had slowly faded away.

And somehow, in the middle of all that, I found myself in a pair of ugly socks.

The Quiet Loss of Self

Looking back, I don't think I even realized how much of myself I had set aside over the years. It wasn't intentional; it was just small things, little compromises that added up. The way I dressed, the way I spent my time, the things that used to bring me joy, but got pushed to the side.

After the divorce, I stood in front of my closet and felt like I didn't recognize anything in it. Some clothes belonged to a version of me that didn't quite fit anymore, literally and figuratively. Others felt like they were chosen with someone else in mind, not me.

And then one day, I grabbed a pair of socks that were objectively hideous. Bright, mismatched, completely unnecessary. And for the first time in a long time, I felt a spark of something I had been missing: joy.

The Power of Small Acts of Joy

Those ugly socks became my small act of defiance. A reminder that I could choose things just because they made me happy, without overthinking or justifying it.

So I bought more. Ridiculous patterns, neon colors, socks that made no sense with any outfit. Every morning, pulling on those socks became a ritual, a little moment of joy that was entirely mine.

They reminded me that happiness doesn't have to be this big, overwhelming thing.

Sometimes, it starts with something small. Something silly. Something as simple as wearing a pair of socks that make you smile.

*Sometimes, it starts with
something small.
something silly.*

*Something as simple as
wearing a pair of socks
that make you smile.*

Reclaiming Myself, One Step at a Time

It wasn't really about the socks. It was about remembering that I didn't have to be anything other than myself.

That I could take up space. That I could choose things that made me feel good, without worrying about how they looked to anyone else.

Divorce wasn't just an ending; it was a beginning. A chance to figure out what I liked, what I wanted, what felt right for me.

And the socks? They were just the first step in reclaiming that.

Finding Yourself Again

If you've ever gone through a big life transition, whether it's a breakup, a move, or a job change, you know how easy it is to feel like you've lost yourself along the way. But you can find your way back. And sometimes, it starts with something small.

Maybe for you, it's wearing a color you haven't worn in years. Maybe it's a song that reminds you of a version of yourself you loved. Maybe it's picking up an old hobby, cutting your hair, or yes—wearing the ugliest socks you can find.

Whatever it is, let it be yours. Let it remind you that you're allowed to choose joy, in whatever way feels right.

And if you ever need a reminder that you don't have to have it all figured out – start with the socks.



About the Author:

Carrie is part of the MDW leadership team and is dedicated to creating safe, judgment-free spaces where everyone feels heard and valued.

Carrie holds a Perinatal Mental Health Certification from Postpartum Support International (PSI), specializing in fertility challenges, postpartum mood disorders, and the often-overlooked experience of hyperemesis gravidarum (HG). She is also a certified Divorce Coach, guiding clients through endings with clarity and empowerment.

She owns Noreila Healing & Wellness in Wheaton, Illinois, offering both in-person and virtual sessions to ensure accessibility across the state.

Outside of her work, Carrie can be found joyfully raising her daughter and curating her next Nordstrom haul—fully embracing her belief that treating yourself is a form of self-respect.



SHIRT



This bold graphic tee from Octopied Mind is more than just a statement piece, it's a celebration of self-expression and individuality.

Hand-drawn, every detail reflects the brand's mission to empower you to feel at home in your own skin.

We love this company because their creations aren't just clothes, they're reminders to embrace your true self with confidence and unapologetic style.

Don't Tell Me What To Do T-Shirt

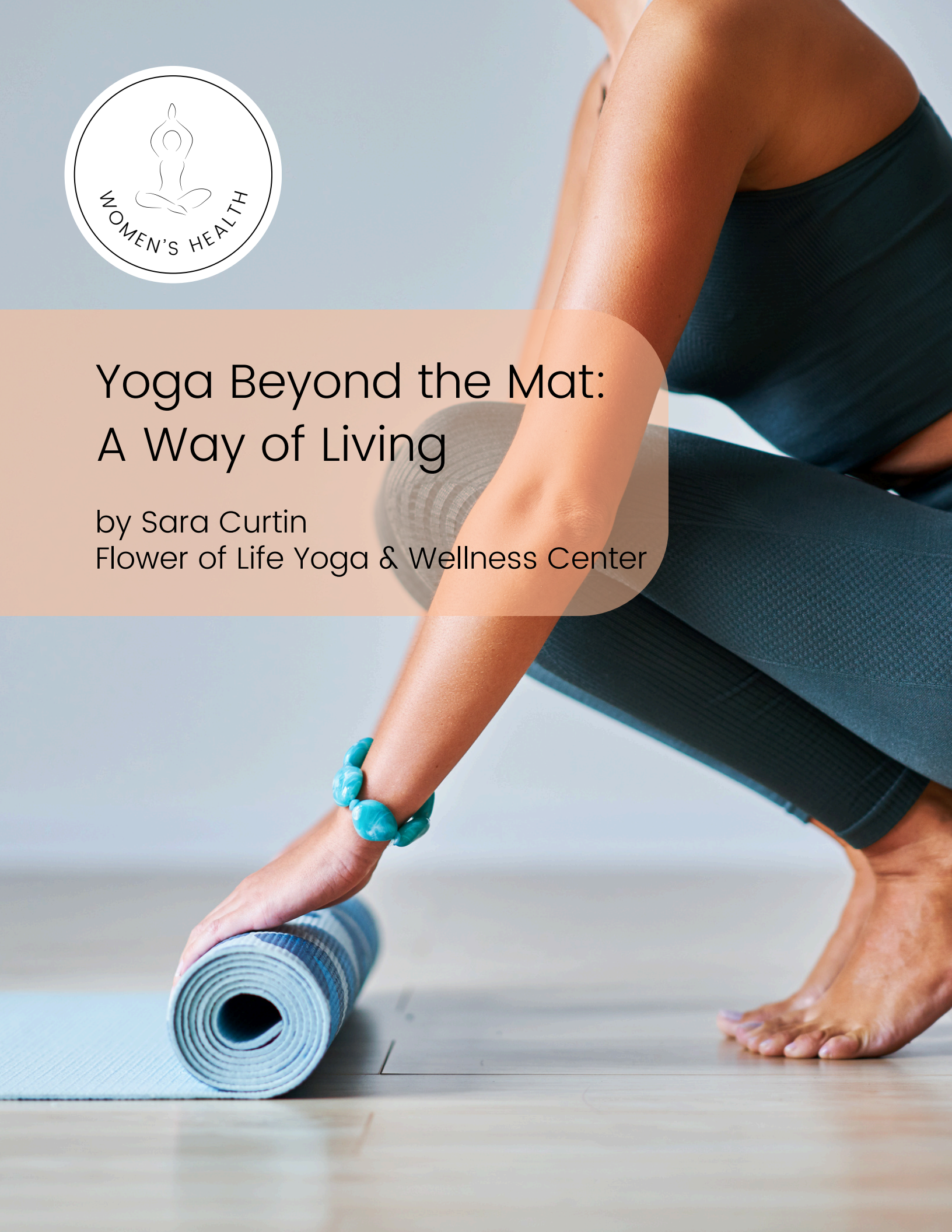
OCTOPIED MIND





Yoga Beyond the Mat: A Way of Living

by Sara Curtin
Flower of Life Yoga & Wellness Center



FROM MAT FLOW TO LIFE FLOW

When we hear the word yoga, most of us imagine people moving through graceful postures on a mat. While the physical practice is an important doorway, it's only one part of a much bigger picture.

Beyond the poses, yoga is a way of moving through the world with greater awareness. It's the choice to pause before reacting, to take a breath when life feels overwhelming, to meet challenges with patience rather than resistance. It shows up in compassion toward others, in gratitude for small moments, and in the ability to stay present when distractions pull us away.

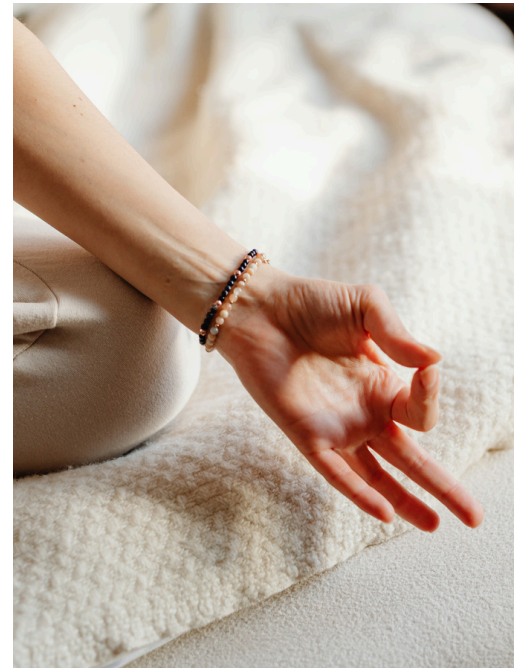
*The lessons learned on the mat - strength, flexibility, and balance -
are mirrors of what we cultivate off it.*

Strength becomes resilience in difficult times. Flexibility becomes adaptability when life takes an unexpected turn. Balance becomes the harmony we strive for in relationships, work, and self-care.

Ultimately, yoga isn't about perfecting a pose; it's about transforming the way we live.

The beauty of yoga is that its wisdom isn't limited to the studio—it follows us into our routines, relationships, and challenges. Each pose offers more than a physical stretch, it carries a lesson for how we move through life.

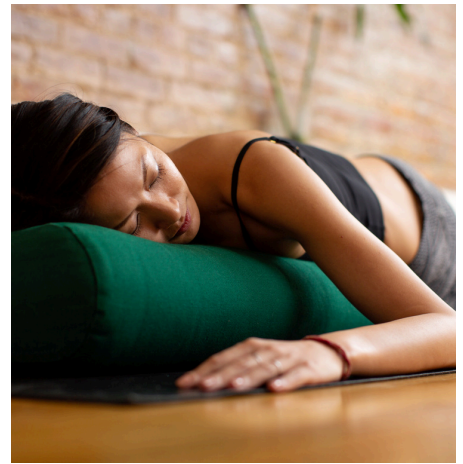
Below, you'll find a couple of practices paired with their "off-the-mat" takeaways, showing how yoga wisdom can guide both body and everyday living.



Rest / Power in the Pause

Yoga lesson: Sitting in stillness and embracing silence helps your body fully absorb the benefits of your practice. Rest restores your body, so you can return stronger and more centered!

Life takeaway: In a culture of constant doing, pausing is a radical form of self-care. Rest is not laziness; it's the fuel that allows you to keep showing up fully, and opens the door for new ideas to arise.



Flexibility / Openness to Possibility

Yoga lesson: Flexibility isn't about touching your toes; it's about meeting your body where it is today and allowing space for change.

Life takeaway: Off the mat, flexibility means going with the flow without holding onto expectations. When plans shift and we remain open, new paths and unexpected opportunities can unfold.

Yoga isn't just a practice we roll out on the mat, it's a way of shaping how we meet the world. Every pose, every pause, every breath holds a reminder that strength, flexibility, and balance are already within us, waiting to be called into daily life. The next time you step into a posture, notice not just how your body feels, but how the lesson might follow you into your relationships, your work, and the quiet in-between moments. That's the heart of yoga: not perfection, but presence.

About the Author:

Sara Curtin is the founder and owner of Flower of Life Yoga & Wellness Center, 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.



BEAUTY



Carrie's Picks

"I love these products because they turn everyday routines into little luxuries! Like the soft, comforting scent of Phlur's Vanilla & Cream Body Mist Duo or the perfect pop of deep plum from ella + mila's La Vie En Rose polish.

I also swear by Jolie's Filtered Showerhead, which leaves my skin and hair feeling refreshed and healthy. Together, they're my go-to trio for feeling polished, pampered, and cared for."



Vanilla & Cream Body Mist Duo
by Phlur



La Vie En Rose Polish
by ella + mila



The Filtered Showerhead
by Jolie

SUMMER HAIR RECOVERY

by Elizabeth Rago

After a season of sun, pool chlorine, and endless topknots, our hair often feels like it's waving a white flag by September. Ends are fried, scalps are dry, and frizz has become its own personality trait. This is the time to reset, repair, and give your hair the same post-summer TLC you'd give your skin.

Enter Ren Jord (Norwegian for pure Earth), a haircare brand rooted in organic, nutrient-rich, and sustainable formulations that bring hair back to life - starting at the scalp. Their best-selling Balancing Tonic and Renewing Oil Treatment are a powerhouse duo designed to not just mask summer damage, but actively restore, strengthen, and protect your hair for the season ahead.

The Balancing Tonic: A Facial for Your Scalp

Think of this as the deep clean and reset your scalp has been begging for. The Balancing Tonic detoxes and stimulates hair follicles while maintaining the natural oils your hair needs.

- Hemp seed oil boosts blood circulation in the scalp, fueling hair growth.
- Tamanu oil supports the cellular health of your follicles, setting the stage for stronger, thicker hair.

Use it daily to bring balance back to your roots, reduce fallout, and encourage new growth.

The Renewing Oil Treatment: Strength + Density

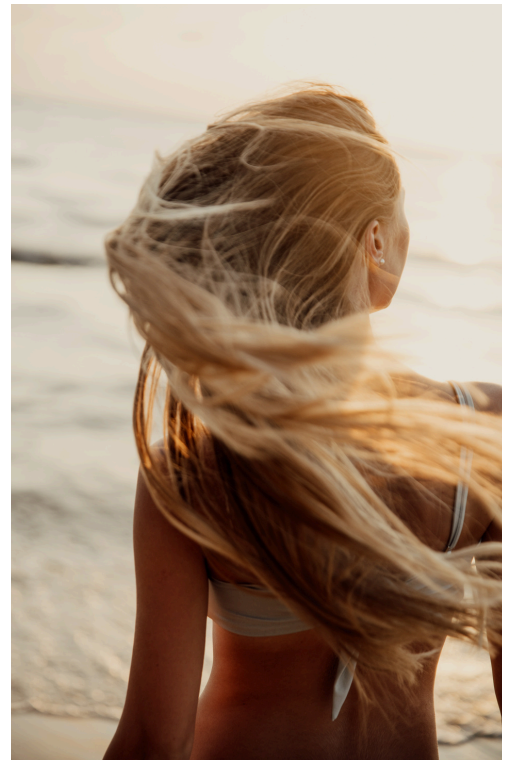
If the Tonic is the reset, the Renewing Oil Treatment is the rebuild. Packed with nutrient-dense ingredients like squalane and cypress oil, this treatment helps detox follicles, seal in moisture, and improve hair density and elasticity.

The result? Stronger, shinier hair that's more resistant to breakage and split ends. Bonus: this oil also works wonders as an eyebrow growth treatment (file that under "multi-tasking beauty secrets").

Why We Love Ren Jord

Ren Jord isn't just another clean beauty label. Each product is made with:

- Organic, biodegradable, cold-pressed ingredients (retaining 97% more nutrients than heat-processed formulas).
- Sustainable, small-batch production for potency and freshness.
- Recyclable and compostable packaging, so your hair health doesn't cost the Earth.





September Reset

September is the season of fresh starts: new routines, crisp air, and a chance to restore balance. Just as you swap your wardrobe from linen to layers, it's the perfect time to swap in products that support long-term hair health.

Ren Jord's Balancing Tonic and Renewing Oil Treatment are more than recovery tools for summer damage—they're rituals that help you enter fall with stronger roots, healthier growth, and hair that feels nourished from the inside out.

About the Founder:

For more than 20 years, hairstylist Jessi Atkocaitis has been on a mission to answer a deceptively simple question: Why are there so many mystery ingredients in luxury hair products—and what are they actually doing to our scalps and hair health?

Frustrated by seeing her clients (and herself) struggle with hair loss, dryness, and frizz while expensive products offered little relief, Jessi turned to the same principles that had transformed her skin and home: organic, non-toxic, sustainable choices. When she couldn't find a hair care line that met those standards, she decided to create it herself.

Her first experiment, the Balancing Tonic, was tested on her own hair for over a year, with stunning results: a healthier scalp, stronger growth, less frizz, and more shine. Encouraged, she developed additional products rooted in the same philosophy: clean, effective, and respectful of both body and planet.

The result is Ren Jord – meaning “pure Earth” in tribute to Jessi's Norwegian heritage – a line of organic hair care products designed to restore balance, promote growth, and honor the natural beauty in all of us.



ETSY FINDS



Essential Oil Diffuser Bracelet
shehawaii on Etsy



Tourmaline Earrings
RobinWoodard on Etsy



Belgian Linen Scarf
Linenia on Etsy

MENTAL HEALTH



KETAMINE FOR TREATMENT-RESISTANT DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

by Caitlin Strebing, AGACNP, Nurse Practitioner
Relief Mental Health

Ketamine is a medication first created in a laboratory in the early 1960s and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a general anesthetic in 1970. In the mid-1970s, researchers recognized its potential use as an antidepressant medication.

However, research into ketamine for its mental health benefits didn't begin until more than 20 years later, with the first peer-reviewed research paper on the antidepressant effects of ketamine appearing early in the year 2000.

Since then, research has shown that ketamine – in various forms, including the nasal spray SPRAVATO® and intramuscular injections – can help people with a variety of mental health diagnoses.

Another effective delivery method for ketamine is through an intravenous drip, called an IV ketamine infusion. The off-label use of IV ketamine can help people with:

- Treatment-resistant depression
- Major depressive disorder
- Bipolar depression
- Anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder

Over the past two and a half decades, peer-reviewed research on ketamine has shown the following:

- It's fast-acting; many patients experience a reduction in depressive symptoms in under an hour
- Ongoing symptom reduction after initial infusion:
- Six studies reported symptom reduction for three weeks
- Three studies reported symptom reduction for one month
- Three studies reported symptom reduction for six weeks
- Significant symptom reduction in 70% of patients with depression

That's why IV ketamine for mental health treatment is becoming increasingly common. It's effective and can offer symptom relief for diagnoses such as treatment-resistant depression (TRD), which is defined as depression that doesn't respond well to at least two attempts at traditional treatment with a standard antidepressant and psychotherapy.



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE U.S.

Mental health is in the news far more often than it was just five years ago. Several factors account for this.

First, the COVID-19 pandemic increased awareness of mental health, as treatment professionals overwhelmingly agreed that the consequences of public safety measures like self-isolation, social distancing, remote work, and virtual school could exacerbate existing mental health diagnoses and lead to an increase in the overall prevalence of diagnoses such as anxiety and depression.

Second, two advisories from the Surgeon General of the United States got everyone's attention: one about a growing mental health crisis among youth and adolescents, and another about an epidemic of loneliness and isolation among U.S. adults.

Finally, the obvious: the past few years have been more stressful than usual in the U.S. From the uncertainty and fear around COVID-19, to contentious social and political debates that have persisted much longer than anyone expected, to increasing suicide rates – particularly among young people – the need for effective, accessible mental health treatment is more important now than ever.

Evidence shows mental health treatment with ketamine infusions can help reduce symptoms significantly. This fact alone can bring hope to millions of people in the U.S. with treatment-resistant mental health diagnoses. The presence of this new and effective treatment is also important in light of data in the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2022 NSDUH) that show that only 50–75 percent of people diagnosed with a mental health disorder receive professional care, leaving millions of people untreated, living with symptoms that cause serious disruption in their daily lives.



Treatment With IV Ketamine: How it Works

Traditional mental health treatment most often involves an evaluation by a licensed clinician, a diagnosis of a mental health disorder, if present, and then a treatment plan by a psychiatric provider (mainly for prescription medication such as antidepressants) or therapist.

Treatment with IV ketamine starts the same way: assessment, diagnosis, and treatment plan. While traditional treatment might include a combination of psychotherapy, medication, and lifestyle changes that support optimal health, treatment with IV Ketamine most often follows this protocol, or one very similar.

IV Ketamine: Treatment Session Details

First, the patient and the provider – often a nurse practitioner, but always a qualified and skilled clinician – prepare for the session.

At Relief Mental Health, patients relax in a comfortable chair in a private treatment room. The clinician initiates the infusion, which lasts around 45 minutes.

After the infusion, the clinician monitors the patient for at least 30 minutes. A treatment session typically lasts about 90 minutes.

Since one possible side-effect of IV ketamine is drowsiness, patients arrange transportation to and from sessions.

IV Ketamine: A Typical Treatment Plan

A full course of treatment with IV ketamine may vary by patient needs and provider preference.

At Relief, an effective treatment protocol includes six treatment sessions over a period of 2-3 weeks. Some patients may require booster sessions, depending on their response to the initial treatment protocol.

In some cases, patients don't need any booster sessions at all.

Patients who receive boosters may return for sessions monthly, every six months, or at a schedule determined by the individual needs and provider input.

Summing It Up:

IV Ketamine for Mental Health

We're fortunate to live in a time when – finally – the stigma around mental health diagnoses and treatment is fading.

In the past, many people struggling with their mental health were wary of treatment, for various reasons: the stigma, the effectiveness, the side effects of medication, and a general lack of knowledge and awareness of the most important facts surrounding mental health disorders and treatment options.

What are those facts?

I'll offer three:

1. Mental health diagnoses are treatable medical conditions. They're not character flaws or personal failings, and the disruptive symptoms – e.g. withdrawal from friends and family, avoiding triggering situations – are not choices made by the individual, but rather features of the disorders themselves.
2. With professional support and care, it's possible to manage the symptoms of a mental health diagnosis and live a full and fulfilling life.
3. With the advent of new and innovative treatments – including IV ketamine – patients have a greater chance of treatment success than ever before.

There's now every reason to hope that anyone with a mental health diagnosis can find effective treatment – and change their lives for the better.

If you or someone you know is struggling with depression, anxiety, OCD, or other mental health diagnoses, reach out today at 855.205.4764, info@reliefmh.com, or reliefmh.com.

About the Author:

Caitlin Strebing, AGACNP (Adult -gerontology acute care nurse practitioner) is a dedicated healthcare professional with a passion for helping individuals facing treatment-resistant depression, anxiety, and various mental health diagnoses. With a wealth of experience and expertise in psychedelic treatment modalities, she specializes in the administration of intranasal ketamine (SPRAVATO®) and IV ketamine.

Caitlin holds an Acute Care Board Certification and has received clinical training under anesthesiologists, solidifying her status as an expert in ketamine therapies. Her primary objective is to facilitate transformative experiences for patients, aiming for them to leave treatment feeling significantly improved compared to their initial arrival.

With an impressive 12 years of experience in intensive care units (ICUs) at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Caitlin brings a strong foundation in acute care to her practice. Building on this foundation, she has accumulated more than two years of specific expertise in ketamine administration, encompassing both intranasal and IV methods. Currently serving as the lead provider of SPRAVATO® and IV ketamine at Relief, Caitlin plays a pivotal role in advancing innovative and effective mental health treatments.

Caitlin works in close coordination with our team of providers throughout the Chicagoland area to guarantee that our patients have seamless access to a range of treatment services, including transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), psychiatric medication management, and psychotherapy, as needed.

Call (844) 731-7543 or email info@reliefmh.com for more info about scheduling an appointment with Caitlin.





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.

Meet the MDW

Mental Health Advisory Board

The MDW Mental Health Advisory Board is made up of licensed mental health professionals who help guide our mission with expertise, ensuring our resources are reviewed, relevant, and compassionate.

When women reach out for support, we take the time to connect them with a professional who is the best fit for their needs, so they feel supported from the very first step.

Each member serves as a volunteer, offering her time, skills, and stories out of a shared belief in the power of community care, creating space for honesty, healing, and connection.



Carrie Summers
LCSW



Lovey Kaur
LCSW



Amanda Losch
LCSW



Priscilla Dean
MS, LCPC



Dennise Demitro
LCSW



Lindsey Liddicoatt
LCPC, CADC

Reach out for support by emailing themoderndomesticwoman@gmail.com or filling out our Intake Form below.





Therapists with Immediate Openings



Kelly Huggins, LCSW – Batavia & Naperville, IL

- Kelly is a grief and trauma therapist and EMDR-certified clinician who helps adults transform pain into healing, resilience, and renewed hope.

Creating Space Therapy

34 N. Island Ave. Ste. F, Batavia, IL

kelly@creatingspacetherapy.com

(630) 601-3460

creatingspacetherapy.com



Jackie Weber, LCSW – Geneva, IL

- Jackie is a neurodiversity-affirming therapist who draws on 14 years of experience in schools and private practice to guide teens, young adults, and parents through educational systems, life transitions, and emotional challenges with clarity and care.

Weber Therapy and Consulting, PLLC

115 Campbell Street, Suite 209, Geneva, IL

JackieLCSW@jwebertherapy.com

(630) 402-6767

jwebertherapy.com



Brad Graf, LPC – St. Charles, IL

- Brad is a therapist who supports teens and adults through anxiety, life transitions, relationships, new parenthood, and performance pressures, bringing both clinical expertise and his lived experience as an endurance athlete.

Be Present Therapy and Wellness

525 Dunham St., Suite 55, St. Charles, IL

brad@bepresenttw.com

(630) 426-3495

bepresenttw.com



Support Groups



EmpowerHer Women's Group
Starts Sept. 19th
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Stable Minds in Elburn, IL

Reach out to
angel@anchorcounseling.org

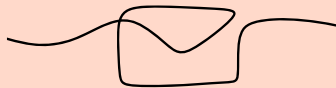
Sign up



Self-Compassion &
Radical Kindness Group
Starts Sept. 16th
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Health & Healing Therapy
Bartlett, IL

Reach out to
info@healthandhealingtherapy.com



Single Moms Support Group
2nd & 4th Wednesday of the
Month
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

TriCity Family Services
Geneva, IL

Call 630-232-1070
for the meeting location.



Journey to Balanced Eating
Laura Listens
Naperville & Glen Ellyn, IL

6-week group focused on
healing disordered eating
patterns and nurturing a
healthier relationship with food.

Reach out to
support@lauralistens.com



Womens Support Group
Hosted by MDW

Maple Leaf Coffee House in
St. Charles, IL

Meets the 1st and 3rd
Wednesdays of each month.

Reach out to
themoderndomesticwoman@gmail.com
or text 630-946-9102



Moms Support Group
Hosted by MDW

Batavia Library in
Batavia, IL

Meets the 2nd and 4th
Wednesdays of each month.

Reach out to
themoderndomesticwoman@gmail.com
or text 630-946-9102

WHAT TO SAY

*(and what
not to say)*

TO A LOVED ONE
STRUGGLING

*A reflection for
Suicide Awareness
Month*

by Lovey Kaur
Ellie Mental Health
Burr Ridge, IL



IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY

Mental health is real.

And it's hard to stay
grounded in a world
that expects us to
always be on and at
our best.

Struggling with your mental
health doesn't mean
you're weak.

It means you're human.

IF YOU'VE EVER THOUGHT...



"I don't want to be here
anymore."

Please know:

There is help.
There is hope.
You are not alone.

Please trust that it will
get better.

How to Talk With a Loved One

*say
this:*

- ✓ "I'm here for you."
- ✓ "That sounds really hard."
- ✓ "You matter to me."
- ✓ "Can I sit with you?"
- ✓ "Want help finding support?"

*not
this:*

- ✗ "Just cheer up."
- ✗ "It's not that bad."
- ✗ "Others have it worse."
- ✗ "You're overreacting."

WHEN SOMEONE'S IN CRISIS



- ✓ Listen without judgment.
- ✓ Validate their feelings.
- ✓ Ask directly: "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?"
- ✓ Stay with them + help connect to care.
- ✓ Keep checking in, it matters.

Crisis Resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call/text)

Text 741741 → Crisis Text Line

Veterans: Dial 988, then press 1

LGBTQ+ Youth: The Trevor Project

1-866-488-7386



Illinois: Hope For The Day is a local resource that provides education and resources

www.hftd.org

WHEN WE DON'T TALK ABOUT SUICIDE, THE SILENCE FEEDS STIGMA.

Stigma keeps people suffering alone. But when we create safe spaces for openness, we create opportunities for healing, reminders that none of us has to carry pain by ourselves. Here are some truths we need to hold close during Suicide Awareness Month:

- Talking about suicide breaks the shame and isolation.
- Openness creates healing.
- Conversations remind us that support is possible and recovery is real.
- No one should ever feel alone in their pain.
- Compassion and connection can be lifesaving.

The statistics remind us of the urgency:

- The statistics remind us of the urgency:
- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S.
- It's the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10–34.
- 49,316 lives were lost in 2023—that's 135 people every day.
- Men die by suicide nearly 4x more than women.
- 55% of deaths involve firearms.

Behind every number is a person: a son or daughter, a parent, a friend, a member of our community. Suicide awareness isn't just about data; it's about remembering the human beings whose lives mattered deeply. This month, I invite you to reflect on the role we each play in reducing stigma and increasing connection.

Healing begins with conversations, and together, we can create a world where no one feels alone in their pain.

About the Author:



Lovey is an LCSW at Ellie Mental Health in Burr Ridge, with extensive experience navigating women's mental health issues around relationships, how they change over the lifespan, and the malleability women typically have to embody.

Lovey also addresses the challenges seen in the South Asian culture that are often "swept under the rug."

As a member of the MDW Mental Health Advisory Board, Lovey believes good mental health creates a ripple effect, strengthening confidence, decision-making, and overall well-being.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join in on a variety of events hosted by MDW and our partners. Learn more and sign up here.

RSVP

*Men's
Event*

WHISKEY, WINGS & REAL TALK

SEPT. 9, 2025 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

The Lewis, St. Charles, IL



RSVP

MOMS SUPPORT GROUP

SEPT. 10 7:15 PM – 8:30 PM

Batavia Library, Batavia, IL

Text 630-946-9102
for more info

DISCOVER. DEFINE. DESIGN.

OCT. 18 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Baker Community Center, St. Charles, IL



RSVP

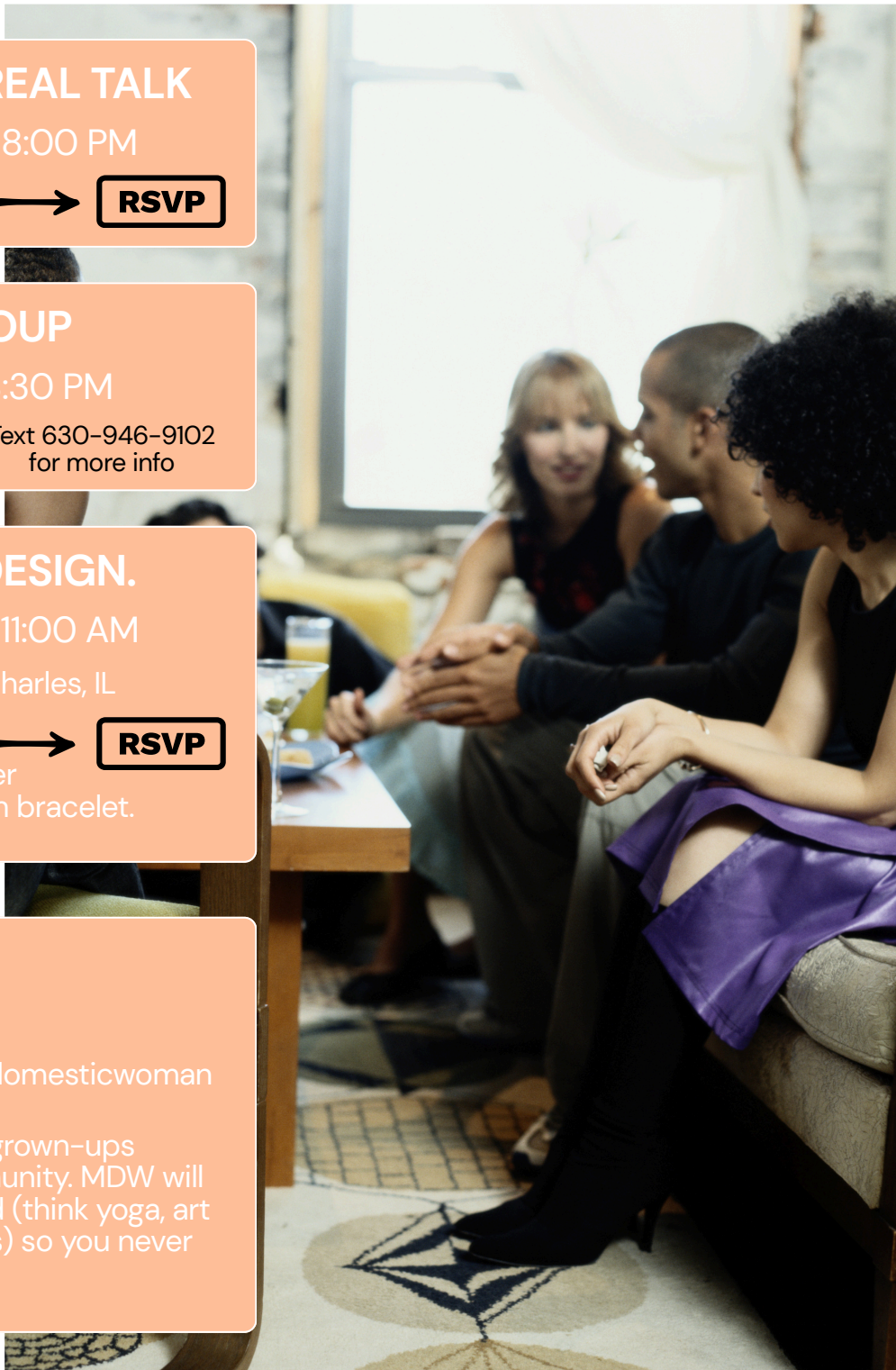
Hands-on workshop to discover your values and make a custom bracelet.

WHERE'S MDW?

ONGOING

Follow on social @themoderndomesticwoman

Think Where's Waldo... but for grown-ups seeking connection and community. MDW will be sharing where we're headed (think yoga, art shows, live music, social events) so you never know where we'll turn up next.



PARENTING



RESOURCE

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS SUPPORTING A NEURODIVERSE TEEN



MDW guides help you unpack topics and provide practical tools to help you in your everyday.

Reviewed and approved by a licensed mental health practitioner.

Parenting a neurodiverse teen is equal parts rewarding and challenging.

Between navigating school systems, sorting through acronyms, and trying to meet your child's emotional needs, it's easy to feel stretched thin.

That's why Jackie Weber, LCSW, created a comprehensive, compassionate resource to help you feel more equipped and less alone on this journey.



MDW FREE DOWNLOAD



5 Tips for Helping Your Child Transition Back-to-School

The transition from summer mode to school mode can feel big, for both kids and parents. MDW Mental Health Advisory Board member, Lindsay Liddicoatt, created a Cope Ahead Plan to help you and your child feel prepared and confident before the stress hits.

The Cope Ahead Plan isn't about perfection. It's about giving your family tools to handle challenges before they happen, so small bumps don't derail the whole day.

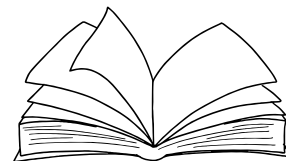


#1 - Identify potential stressors. Ask yourself, "What specific situations will cause anxiety for me or my child?"

Examples: Changes in routine, social situations, academic pressure, logistical issues, separation anxiety.

#2 - Create a routine and rehearse it. Go over the morning routine and evening routine (after school) with your child. Examples:

- AM - Use a visual checklist (get dressed, brush teeth, pack backpack, shoes on).
- PM - Homework/Study Time - Keep it consistent—same space, similar time each day, if possible.

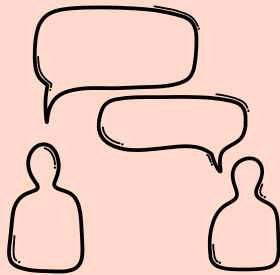


#3 - Develop coping skills. Teach simple breathing exercises—like take a deep breath in through the nose and out through the mouth, to calm the nervous system.

Help your child come up with simple, positive phrases they can say to themselves, such as, "I can do this" or "It is ok to feel nervous, it will get better."

Create a Worry Box or Worry Journal – Having your child write down their worries can help give less power to their thoughts.

Identify a trusted adult. Make sure your child knows who they can talk to at school if they are feeling anxious – a teacher, counselor, or the nurse.

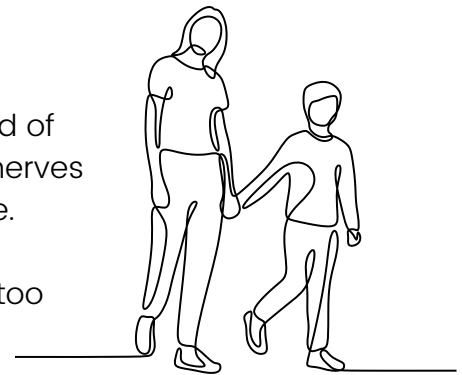


#4 – Foster Communication. Create a safe space for your child to talk about their feelings without judgment.

Listen actively, share your own experiences, set aside time for check-ins.

#5 – Plan for fun and connection. Celebrate the first day/week of school. This tells kids, “I see you, I’m proud of you, and I believe in you,” which can ease first-week nerves and help them step into new routines with confidence.

Don’t forget to schedule downtime and don’t pack in too many extracurriculars.



About the Author:



Lindsey Liddicoatt is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor in Geneva who focuses on parenting and sober curious living for the MDW community.

As a member of the MDW Mental Health Advisory Board, she brings a warm, strengths-based approach to helping clients navigate life’s challenges, from trauma recovery and mental health concerns to building resilience and exploring sobriety.

SKIN



Elizabeth's Picks

'I fell in love with Honey Drop after trying their lip balm. It's one of those products you don't want to leave the house without. What I love most is that everything they make feels safe and trustworthy enough to use on my kids, which says a lot.

Their skin revival oil, sun butter, and bug defense are all thoughtfully crafted, smell amazing, and work, making everyday care feel simple and joyful. It's clear they pour love and intention into every batch, and that's why Honey Drop has quickly become a staple in my home."



Sun Butter
by Honey Drop



Bite Fight
by Honey Drop



Skin Revival
by Honey Drop

JAMMIES



Nothing melts hearts quite like a baby in cozy jammies and this pair is pure joy.

With whimsical little chickens, fold-over mittens and footies, and a stretchy, breathable fit, they're as soft as they are practical.

Bonus: the 2-way zipper makes midnight diaper changes a breeze, so everyone gets back to dreamland faster.

Spring Chicken Bamboo Sleeper

ARLO.HENDRIX KIDS



RELATIONSHIPS





6 tips

FOR NAVIGATING GENDER IDENTITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

By Robyn Ashbaugh, LMFT
Solid Foundations Therapy

Whether you're exploring your own gender identity or your partner is, navigating that journey together can feel overwhelming — like trying to solve a Rubik's cube... blindfolded.

But with understanding, communication, and a healthy dose of compassion, it is possible to move forward with love and clarity.

In this post, we'll unpack what it means to navigate gender identity within a relationship, why it matters, and how to do it in a way that brings you closer — not further apart. (Spoiler: therapy can be a big help.)

First, What Is Gender Identity?

Gender identity is your inner sense of self; who you know yourself to be. That could be male, female, both, neither, or something entirely different. It's not the same as your physical anatomy or who you're attracted to.

And it's definitely not something up for debate.

We'll also be using terms like LGBTQ+, which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, plus other identities not captured in those first five letters — including nonbinary, genderqueer, and more.

The “plus” matters. It's about inclusion.

WHEN GENDER IDENTITY COMES INTO A RELATIONSHIP

If you or your partner are exploring or expressing a new or deeper truth about gender, it can be a big shift. For the person coming out or transitioning, this is often something they've been thinking about for a long time. For their partner, it might come as a surprise, and that's okay.

It's normal for this process to bring up lots of feelings: confusion, fear, love, pride, grief, hope. All of it is valid.

The key is to stay connected, open, and curious.

Can a Relationship Survive a Gender Transition?

Yes, and many do. In fact, some relationships become even stronger.

But it does take effort on both sides.

Acceptance, honesty, communication, and compassion are essential. And sometimes, this path leads to a different kind of ending — not because of failure, but because both people are growing in different directions. That's okay, too.

How to Support Your Partner (or Yourself) Through Gender Identity Exploration

If your partner comes out as transgender or begins exploring their gender identity, you don't need to have all the answers. Your job isn't to be perfect — it's to show up with love, listen without judgment, and keep learning.

You can be a supportive partner and still have feelings of your own. What matters is how you handle them.



6 TIPS

FOR NAVIGATING GENDER IDENTITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

1. **Ask, Don't Assume** – If your partner shares something new about their identity, avoid jumping to conclusions. Ask them what language feels right, what they need, and how you can support them. Make space for their truth.
2. **Do Your Own Research** – It's not your partner's job to educate you about gender 24/7. Read books, listen to podcasts, join support groups, or search online. The more you understand, the more connected you'll feel.
3. **Share Your Feelings, Thoughtfully** – You're allowed to have emotions, too. Just remember to share them in a way that keeps empathy at the center. Try, "This is new for me and I'm scared," instead of "You're ruining our relationship."
4. **Find a Therapist Who Gets It** – Not all therapists are trained in LGBTQ+ issues. A supportive and affirming therapist can create a space where both partners feel safe to explore, express, and work through difficult conversations together.
5. **Expect Change, And Welcome It** – Gender identity isn't always fixed in one place. Names, pronouns, and expressions may shift. That doesn't mean your partner is confused — it means they're becoming more themselves. Celebrate that growth.
6. **Lead with Compassion** – There will be awkward moments. You'll both make mistakes. There may be grief and joy. It's okay. What matters most is leading with kindness, for your partner and for yourself.



Your partner exploring their gender identity isn't a betrayal. It's an invitation to build a relationship rooted in truth, vulnerability, and real connection. Whether your relationship continues or takes a new shape, honoring each other's truth is a powerful act of love.

So take a deep breath. You're not doing it wrong just because it's hard. You're doing the work. And that means something.

If you find yourself struggling with gender identity within your relationship, you don't have to go at it alone. Solid Foundations Therapy has a variety of therapists ready to support you._

4932 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Info@SolidFoundationstherapy.com

(630) 633-8532



About the Author:

Robyn Ashbaugh brings warmth, honesty, and even a little humor into the room, because she knows real change happens when you feel safe enough to be yourself.

Her style is down-to-earth and practical—she helps clients get to the root of what's really going on, and then gives them the tools to move forward with confidence. She's passionate about helping people build strong, healthy relationships—without losing their sense of individuality along the way.

Whether you're navigating intimacy, exploring nontraditional relationships, living with chronic illness, or simply trying to feel more comfortable in your own skin, Robyn creates a space where you can be open, challenged, and supported.

Robyn has advanced training in Gottman Method Couples Therapy, is affirming of kink, polyamory, and LGBTQ+ clients, and is currently working toward her AASECT Sex Therapy Certificate. But beyond her credentials, what makes Robyn stand out is her ability to connect quickly, meet you exactly where you are, and remind you that growth doesn't have to feel clinical—it can feel human.



SOCIAL

Fierce, fabulous, and full of wisdom, these women are our go-tos this month for navigating relationships, dodging burnout, and reminding us that while life is tough, we can handle it (with the right tools + a whole 'lotta grace).



"I'm pretty sure
I'm right!"

Jenny Maxwell

Jenny Maxwell is a communications and personal development coach, as well as the host of "Who Do You Think You Are Talking To", where she helps people master their emotions, communicate effectively, and build the relationships they deserve.



Dr. Seiola Hood

We love Dr. Hood because she's the kind of therapist who offers practical tools, honest insight, and, through her Poised Powerhouse Podcast, empowers ambitious women to live authentically without sacrificing wellness or peace.





HOME

INSPO



"One of my favorite things to do is take dreamy design inspiration and reimagine it for my own tiny, 100-year-old home."

I love how this space by Melissa Oholendt and her team at Oho Interiors layers moody wallpaper, pretty brass details, and thoughtful textures to create a bathroom that feels both elegant and timeless."

– Elizabeth

Image credit

OHO INTERIORS



FALL VIBES



A couple of weeks ago, we stumbled across a post from Kelsi of Beeyond Boutique on Threads, which stopped us mid-scroll.

"If you see someone promoting their business despite current world events, it's not business as usual. It's business as necessary. I have to eat, too."

We felt that big time. It was real, honest, and a reminder of why we love supporting small businesses everywhere.

Naturally, we started exploring her page, and that's when we spotted her Pumpkin Chai candle.

With its toasted pumpkin chai scent, it's basically fall in a jar and an ode to everyone's favorite cozy beverage.

Toasted Pumpkin Chai Scented Fall Soy Candle

BEEYOND BOUTIQUE

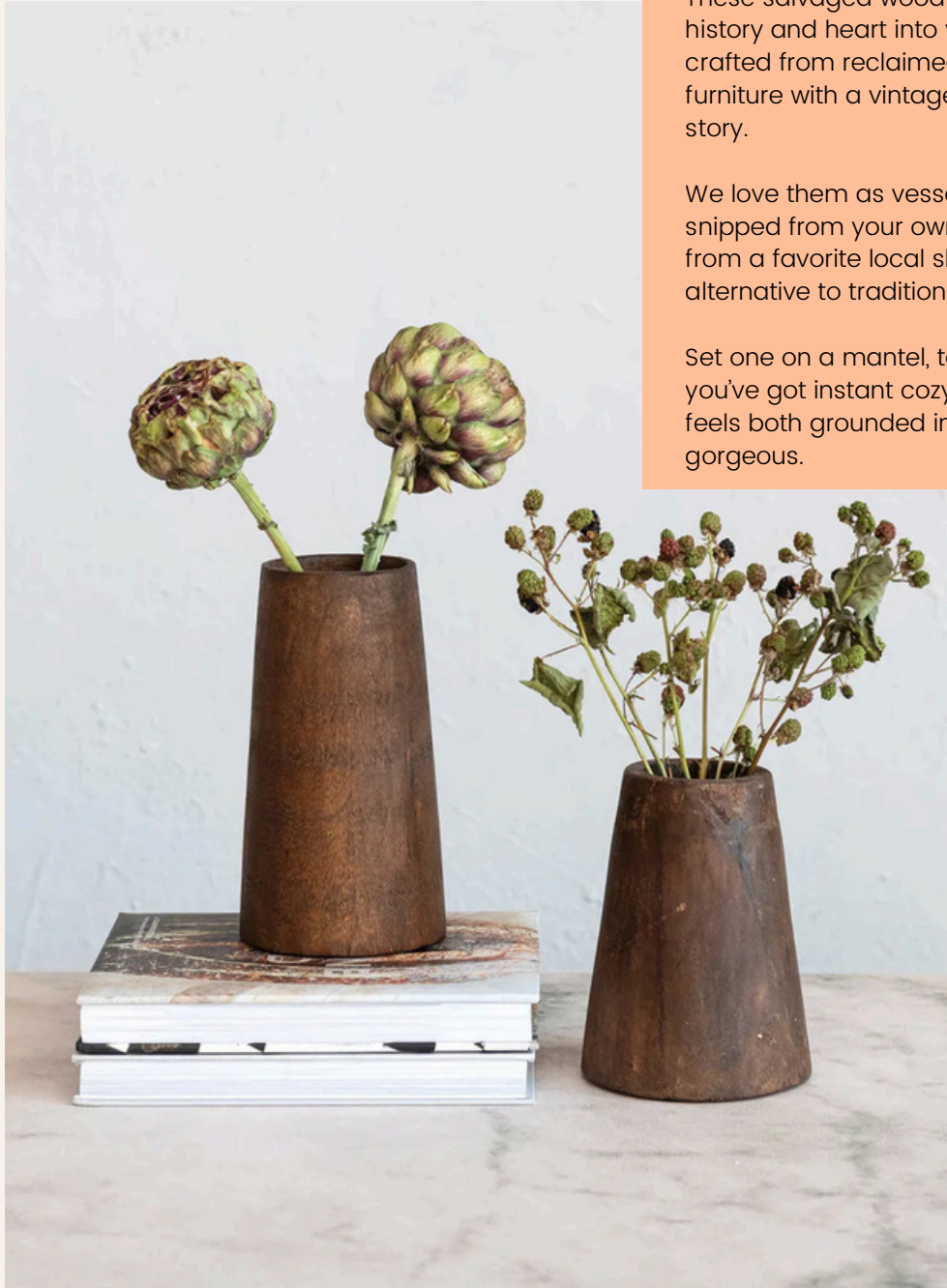


VESSEL

These salvaged wood vases bring a touch of history and heart into your home, each one crafted from reclaimed buildings and furniture with a vintage finish that tells its own story.

We love them as vessels for dried florals, snipped from your own garden or gathered from a favorite local shop. A simple, pretty alternative to traditional fall foliage.

Set one on a mantel, table, or entryway, and you've got instant cozy-season charm that feels both grounded in nature and looks gorgeous.



Reclaimed Wood Vase

THE PEP LINE



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





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