

January 15, 2021

Word for YO Wellness

A Newsletter by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition

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The Word

Chaos

As people who live and work in Yosemite National Park, we become accustomed to some things that people living more “normal” lives may find a bit strange. Maybe it's the sincere joy of discovering treasures in the form of a used article of clothing at a community swap or free bin, or the even greater joy upon seeing one of your former possessions become a treasure for your neighbor. It could be the unbridled passion you have for that one rock, or this plant, or that particular section of the river. Perhaps it's how this strangeness seems to emanate from us Yosemitees like a beacon, so that any tourist can automatically tell that *you* are the one who can give them directions or advice, even if you're not in uniform.

Yet perhaps the most telltale sign of a Yosemite resident is way we learn to live in harmony with complete and utter chaos. Hear me out on this one: we deftly navigate an area where it is normal to see a car driving the wrong way down a one-way road--or even a bike path. We are unfazed as we maneuver through insane crowds at the Village Store, shopping with extreme precision in the quickest manner possible. We become accustomed to regularly fighting off the most cunning of lunchtime thieves--the California Ground Squirrel and the Common Raven--and unabashedly advising complete strangers of the importance of following our example.

We become accustomed to living alongside the moodiness of nature and her extreme and often abrupt changes with ease. We live among rockfalls and we dare to play on the talus fields anyways. We adapt when surrounded by fires and ash rains down from the heavens. We understand when floods drive us out of our homes, with perhaps a lingering disappointment that we cannot stay to watch. We listen intently as wind storms ensue, and excitedly look at the gust-driven change in the new world around us the next day. We hear trees fall to their doom during intense snow storms and tremble in awe when the earth begins to quake under our feet.

Despite all of the disarray that comes alongside working with international tourists and living in harmony with the natural world, we remain stoic, if not appreciative, and go about business as usual. We accept chaos as par for the course of living in Yosemite National Park. My question for you is this: why does this mindset have to stop here? We can apply non-attachment and acceptance to chaos in any realm of our lives. It can be applied inwardly to upwelling emotions or triggering events, or externally when coping with people with polarizing belief systems.

Instead of choosing to get worked up over our own inward changes of emotions or that which we cannot control, we can instead choose to accept those things as part of what it means to live. We can learn to feel through the turbulence, extend compassion towards people of different beliefs, and find gratitude when things change and we are redirected elsewhere. Through this practice, we can find peace with the unknown, make friends with even our least desirable of characteristics, and live a more full and uplifting life. Like the water that often brings such chaos and splendor to our home, it is in our nature to change with the seasons and flow, ever onward. Like the tree in the wind, we bend.

By Jetta Blaine

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Upcoming Events

New!

Activities you can do from home, anytime, anywhere.

Check out our yoga and meditation videos on the Yosemite Community Builder YouTube channel.



Wednesday Night Yoga

Led by Jetta Blaine

Every Wednesday
5:30–6:30pm

zoom.us/join

Personal Meeting ID: 206 626 9920

Passcode: wellness1

Lifestyle Series

Led by Jetta Blaine

A series on everyday lifestyle practices to live a more healthy and fulfilling life, inspired by the ancient yogic principles of the Yamas, Niyamas, and Ayurvedic Medicine. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday.

January 26th
5:30–6:30pm

zoom.us/join

Personal Meeting ID: 206 626 9920

Passcode: wellness1

Creating a Self-Defining Mission

Statement

Led By Jetta Blaine

Use affirmations and goal-setting to help put you in line with your life vision.

Tuesday, January 19th
5:30–6:30pm

zoom.us/join

Personal Meeting ID: 206 626 9920

Passcode: wellness1

Mental Clarity Workshop

Led by Jetta Blaine

Learn tools to clean out mental static and reduce stress

Monday, January 25th
5:30–6:30pm

zoom.us/join

Personal Meeting ID: 206 626 9920

Passcode: wellness1

Virtual Creative Collective Art Sessions

In Partnership with the Center for Creative Arts Therapy, this 4-part series is a space to create art and connect. Each week will have a different theme based in mindfulness and Self-Care. All levels welcome. Basic supplies needed are paper, pen/pencil, markers, color pencils, paint is optional.

Led by Jamie Gonzales

Every Friday
January 15, 22, 29
5:30–6:30pm

zoom.us/join

Meeting ID: 870 7884 7919

Passcode: wellness1

Wellness Programs

On Demand!

Led by Jetta Blaine

On YouTube, search for the Yosemite Community Builder channel to find the following programs.

- Lifestyle Series
- Desk Stretch Sequence
- Pulsing Meditation
- Wednesday Yoga

Saturday HIIT Workout

Led by Nina Listro

Get your blood pumping every Saturday morning with a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout! No equipment needed, just an exercise mat if you have one. All ages and ability levels welcome.

Every Saturday
9:00–9:45am

zoom.us/join

Meeting ID: 826 3446 5078

Passcode: 790932

Martin Luther King Day of Service

Non-violent Communication Dialogue: Speaking Peace

Join the Yosemite VIP Office and Communications Mediator Gail McManus for an NVC workshop in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. This workshop will focus on increasing self-understanding and the very valuable process of engendering harmony with others.

Monday, January 18th
1:00pm

zoom.us/join

Meeting ID: 844 2174 7122

Passcode: MLKDAY-NVC

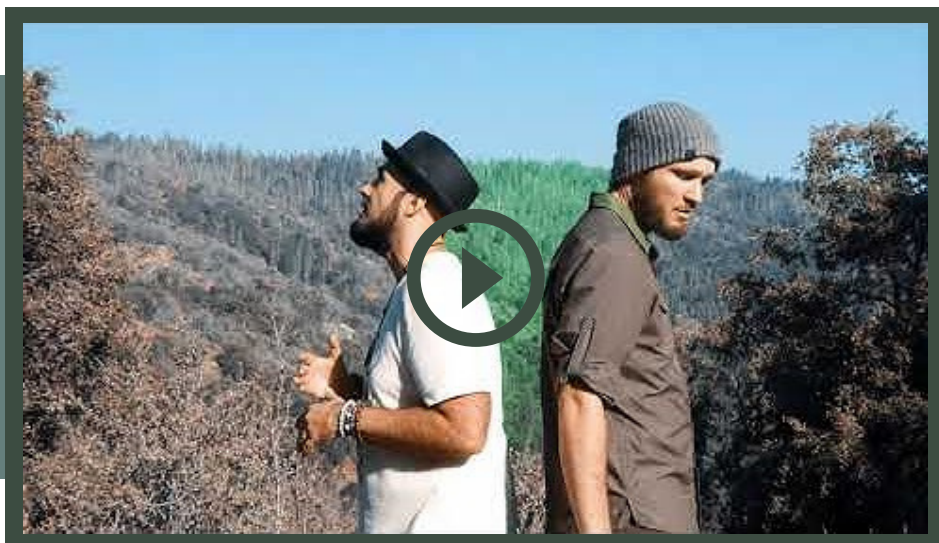
To protect the health of ourselves and our community, all events are being hosted online.

Visit www.yoscommunity.com/events for direct event links and event updates.

Community Submissions



Jewell Sherrer
Half Dome
35mm film



"Depending on the Weather"
Official Music Video
Senior Gigio x Awkwa Man
<https://youtu.be/sNOTkt88qVw>

For a chance to feature your personal artwork, poetry, articles, or short stories in our newsletter, please send your submission to yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com

Wellness News

Recipe

For Yo Wellness

This month's ingredient:

LEFTOVERS

As any professional cook will tell you, the soup of the day is often a product of— you guessed it— leftovers. And the keystone to any soup, the one ingredient to rule them all, is a good stock. Guess what stock is made with? Again: leftovers. Don't toss that turkey or chicken carcass! Keep those veggie scraps out of the compost heap! Instead, stick them in a pot, cover with water, and brew up some delicious, nutritious, brothy goodness.

Basic Turkey or Chicken Stock

1 leftover turkey or chicken carcass, leg bones, thigh bones, etc.

Whole veggies and/or veggie scraps (carrots, celery, onion, kale stems, mushroom stems, etc.)

Several cloves of garlic

Fresh or dried herbs of choice (rosemary, sage, thyme)

1. Combine all ingredients in a stock pot and cover completely with water.
2. Bring to boil, then reduce to simmer.
3. Simmer until stock is reduced by half. Depending on the size of your pot and carcass, this could take a few hours.
4. Using a fine mesh sieve, strain the liquid from the carcass and scraps. Allow to cool.
5. Pour strained stock into plastic or glass storage containers. Store in the freezer.
6. Remove and defrost your stock next time soup is on the menu. Or just drink it straight. It's that delicious.

Note: For our vegetarian friends, simply omit the poultry bones and fill the pot with vegetables (mainly carrots, celery, and onion) for a delicious vegan veggie stock.

7 Emotion-Focused Coping Techniques for Uncertain Times

1. Meditation

- o Meditation helps you learn to acknowledge and sit with all of your thoughts and experiences, even the difficult ones. The key goal of meditation?
 - **Mindfulness:** to recognize thoughts as they come up, accept them, and let them go without stewing over them or judging yourself for having them. You can practice mindfulness anytime, anywhere, and it won't cost you anything. It may feel a little awkward, even unhelpful, at first, and it can take some time before it feels natural. If you stick with it, you'll generally begin seeing some benefits before long.

2. Journaling

- o Journaling is a great way to sort through and come to terms with challenging emotions. When something goes wrong, you might experience a lot of complicated, conflicting feelings. They might feel jumbled up inside you, making the thought of sorting them out exhausting. Or, maybe you're not even sure how to name what you're feeling with words. Exhaustion and confusion are valid feelings and can be a good starting point for putting pen to paper. Sometimes, writing down your feelings — no matter how messy or complex they are — is the first step in working through them. You might eventually find that journaling offers a type of emotional catharsis, as you purge them from your mind and into your journal.
- o To get the most out of journaling, try:
 - writing every day, even if you only have 5 minutes
 - writing whatever comes to mind — don't worry about editing or censoring yourself
 - keeping track of any mood or emotional changes you experience and any factors that might be contributing to the pattern, whether that's your exercise routine, certain foods, or particular relationships

3. Positive Thinking

- o Optimism won't solve problems alone, but it can certainly boost your emotional wellness. It's important to understand that optimistic or positive thinking does not involve ignoring your problems. It's about giving challenges a positive spin and finding pockets of joy to help you get through them.
- o To add more positive thinking to your life, try:
 - building yourself up with positive self-talk instead of talking down to yourself
 - recognizing your successes instead of focusing on "failures" or laughing off mistakes
 - reminding yourself you can always try again
- o All these things are easier said than done, but with a bit of practice, they'll start to feel more natural.

4. Forgiveness

- o It's easy to focus on feelings of injustice or unfairness when someone wrongs you or does something unkind. Most of the time, though, you can't do anything to change the hurt you've sustained. In other words, the damage is done, and there's nothing to do but let go and move forward. Forgiveness can help you let go of hurt and begin healing from it. Of course, forgiveness doesn't always happen easily. It can take some time to come to terms with your pain before you feel able to forgive.
- o Practicing forgiveness can benefit your emotional wellness in a number of ways. You might notice:
 - reduced stress and anger
 - increased compassion
 - greater empathy
 - stronger interpersonal relationships

5. Reframing

- o When you reframe a situation, you look at it from another perspective. This can help you consider the bigger picture instead of getting stuck on little details, as difficult or unpleasant as those details sometimes are.

6. Talking It Out

- o Burying or pushing away negative emotions usually doesn't do much to improve them. You might not actively notice these unwanted emotions if you work very hard at keeping them hidden, but they do eventually tend to resurface.
- o In the meantime, they can trickle out in the form of:
 - mood changes
 - emotional distress
 - physical symptoms like muscle tension or head pain
- o It's generally a good idea to talk about your feelings to any others involved in the situation. They may not even realize they had an impact on you unless you tell them.
- o Communicating your difficulties won't always resolve them, but if an approach to resolution does exist, you're more likely to discover it together.
- o Talking about your emotions to a trusted loved one can also help you feel better, especially when there's no good solution to your problem. Friends and family can provide social and emotional support by listening with empathy and validating your feelings.

7. Working with a Therapist

- o Some serious concerns can cause a lot of distress, especially when you can't do anything to improve your situation.
- o There's not much you can do to change these circumstances and dealing with the painful emotions that come up on your own can be hard. But there's no need to go it alone.
- o A trusted mental health professional can help you manage emotional distress by offering guidance on any of the emotion-focused coping strategies above. They can also provide support that's more specifically tailored to your situation.

Activities

Intro to Somatic Meditation

By Jetta Blaine

This is an active meditation that requires a comfortable place to sit, a pen and paper, as well as a relatively quiet space.

The goal of this activity is to bridge the gap of one's mind and body, as well as to center and reflect. It is ideal for anyone that has a difficult time in seated meditation, or someone who just wants to chill out!

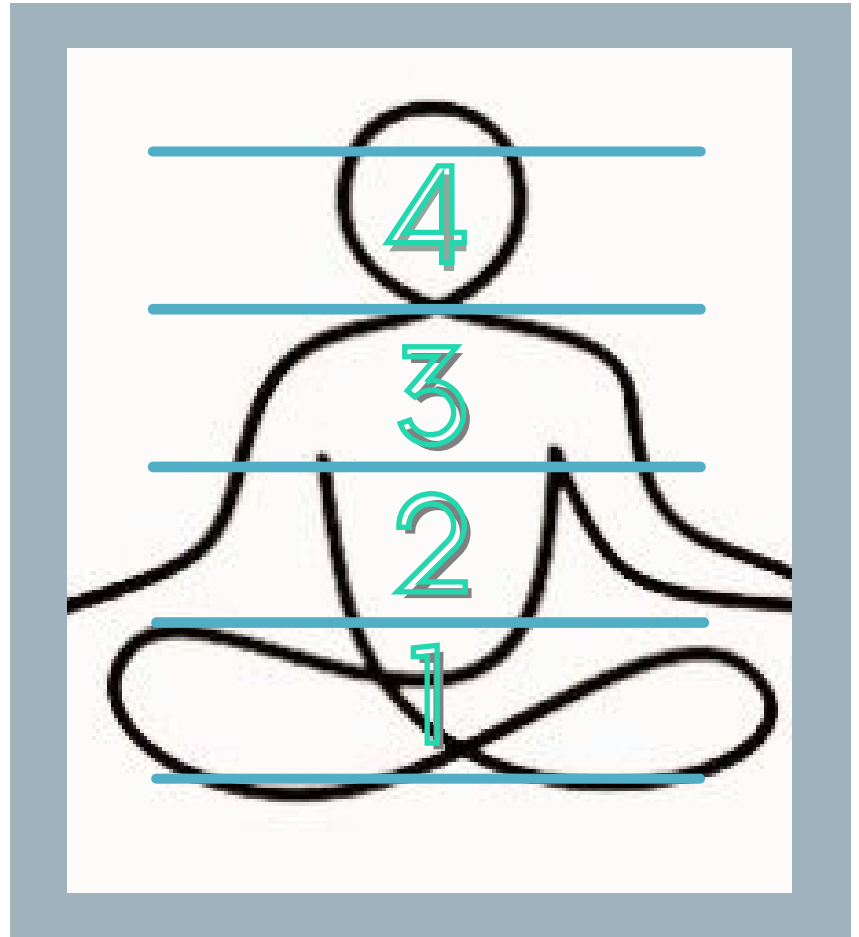
To begin this exercise, carefully look at the picture to the right. We will meditate on each area of the body indicated on the diagram. During each meditation segment, we will make the following observations:

- 1) Observation of sensations present
- 2) Observation of visuals

Start at section one. Spend thirty seconds on each observation for that section of the body, record your findings in a journal, then move on to the next area. You may use an alarm to alert you when to move to the next section, or you can simply move on as desired.

During any kind of meditation practice, it is important not to pass judgement on oneself or the flowing of the mind. Instead, practice observation with indifference and allow thoughts to pass like clouds in the sky.

If desired, you can continue this activity by focusing on smaller areas of your body, or even the area right outside of your body during the practice!



Challenge: Do a regular activity different every day this week!

Example: brush your teeth with you opposite hand, walk a different way to work, etc. Try to embody a sense of play with each new thing and see just how crazy you can get.

Resources

Do your part. Get tested.

FREE OPTUMSERVE TESTING SITE
IN YOSEMITE VALLEY
9034 LOST ARROW RD. YOSEMITE
VALLEY, CA

WEDNESDAYS
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT:
LHI.CARE/COVIDTESTING
1-888-634-1123



Cover your nose

Fully cover your
nose and mouth
Masks should fit snugly
on the sides of your face.

Mariposa County
Health & Human Services Agency

How do we know COVID-19 vaccines work?

Before the FDA determines whether to approve a vaccine or authorize for emergency use, clinical trials are conducted to determine how well it works.

What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials involve researching specific interventions using human volunteers. Clinical trials provide data and information on how well the vaccine works and its safety.

What about real-world conditions?

Experts don't just stop after clinical trials. They continue to use other methods including case-control studies, cohort studies, screening methods, and ecologic analyses.

Where can I go to learn more?

- CDC Vaccine Effectiveness: <https://bit.ly/2JVv4gz>
- CDC Vaccine Safety: <https://bit.ly/3sa2YnK>
- FDA Plans for Monitoring Vaccine Safety & Effectiveness: www.fda.gov/media/143557/download
- FDA Latest COVID-19 Vaccine News: <https://bit.ly/2XqDZ1z>



COVID-19 vaccines are coming
to Yosemite!

Sign up for yours here →



Word for Yo' Wellness is brought to you by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition, an employee resource group (ERG) with members from many of Yosemite's park partners and hosted by the National Park Service. Look for our newsletter the first and fifteenth of every month. Each issue includes recipes, articles, community submissions, special events and more from your fellow park locals. Have a special request or an art submission? Contact yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com for more information!

Resources

Yosemite Medical Clinic
209-372-4637

Mariposa County Health &
Human Services
24-hour Crisis Hotline
209-966-7000

Crisis Text Line
Text 741741



National Suicide Prevention
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>



Veterans Crisis Line
<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Alcoholics Anonymous
Mariposa & Sierra Foothill Chapter
24 Hour Hotline
209-966-3110
<http://www.amariposafellowship.org>

Coronavirus Sanity Guide
<https://www.tenpercent.com/coronavirus/sanityguide>