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## Festive treats

**Food matters**  
 by Evie Fairley

Here are few plant-based recipes for the festive season. All required ingredients can be found at the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op.

### Raw vegan Christmas cake

Source: [www.healthemporium.com.au](http://www.healthemporium.com.au)



#### Ingredients

2 tsp coconut or macadamia nut oil  
 1 large orange  
 4 tbsp brandy or strong chai tea  
 8 medjool dates, pitted  
 100g macadamias (raw)  
 290g almonds (raw)  
 100g walnuts (raw)  
 250g dried figs  
 100g dried cranberries  
 250g raisins  
 259g sultanas  
 1tsp each of ground cinnamon, allspice and ginger  
 Extra macadamias and almonds to decorate

#### Method

Brush a 20cm springform tin with a little coconut or

macadamia oil.

Finely grate the zest of the orange and then juice it.

Combine the orange zest and juice with the brandy and dates. Set aside while preparing the rest of the cake.

Place macadamias, almonds and walnuts in a food processor. Pulse until quite finely chopped but with still with some small pieces. Set the nuts aside.

Put the dates, their soaking liquid, all of the other dried fruits and spices into the food processor and process until they are crumb-sized pieces but not a paste.

Blend in the ground nuts until combined.

Press the mixture into the cake tin, decorate the top with the extra nuts and place into the fridge to set for at least an hour or overnight.

Cut the cake with a wet sharp knife to serve. The cake lasts for at least three weeks covered in the fridge.

### Vegan coconut and rum snowballs

Source: [www.thegreenloot.com](http://www.thegreenloot.com)

#### Ingredients

1 cup coconut flour  
 1/2 cup oat flour  
 5-6 tbsp canned full-fat coconut milk (the creamy part)  
 5-6 tbsp agave syrup  
 1 tsp orange zest  
 1 tsp vanilla extract  
 1.5 tsp rum extract  
 1/3 cup chopped almonds  
 1/2 cup shredded coconut (for rolling)



#### Method

Combine all ingredients in a bowl make sure there are no clumps.

Put dough in fridge for 1-2 hours to chill.

Make about 11 balls.

Then roll in fine desiccated coconut and refrigerate for another hour.

Will keep in fridge for three days.

### Raw mini chocolate cream cakes

Source: [www.onegreenplanet.org](http://www.onegreenplanet.org)

#### Ingredients

**For pecan chocolate crust:**

1 cup pecan meal (just ground up pecans, can use any nut meal of liking)  
 3-4 Medjool dates or 2-3 tablespoons maple syrup  
 1/2 cup cacao powder  
 Pinch sea salt

1 teaspoon vanilla

**For the chocolate filling:**

2 cups cashew pieces  
 1/2 cup coconut oil, liquid  
 1/2 cup maple syrup or agave nectar  
 1/2 cup water  
 2 teaspoons vanilla  
 3/4 cup raw cacao powder or cocoa powder

**For the optional topping:**

Crushed pecans  
 Chocolate sauce



#### Method

**Pecan chocolate crust:**

Place all ingredients into a food processor (can do in a blender) and pulse until combined. You want the crust to slightly stick together.

Grab your mini cheesecake pan and scoop your pecan chocolate crust into your pan. Press down with fingers to firmly place the crust into pan.

Set aside as you make your filling.

**Chocolate filling:**

Soak cashews for about 10-15 minutes (optional), then rinse well. Place cashews into blender with maple syrup, vanilla, and water. Blend for a little bit to get it creamy.

Next add in your cacao powder and coconut oil. Blend until creamy. you may have to scrape down the sides a few times. Just keep blending until it is nice and smooth.

Once chocolate filling is blended, begin scooping your filling into your mini cheesecake pans. Fill them to the top. Set the chocolate cream cakes into your freezer to set for a few hours before removing from pan. You may enjoy this chocolate dessert as is or you may add on more chocolate and pecans.

## In praise of spherification

by Thom Culpepper

Spherification is a culinary technique that results in the generation of soft but secure flavour spheres, similar to seafood (fish and urchin), or citrus (finger limes), 'roes' of condensed, supernatant-culinary essences.

There are two main methods, differing in the amount of calcium utilised to produce the spheres. The basic method is to blend an 'essence' with alginate in solution and immerse these them in a calcium 'fixing' solution, forming a skin on the surface.

The other method is the reverse of this. This involves materials that are higher in acids or booze. Here the core essence containing calcium lactate or calcium lactate gluconate is immersed in an alginate solution bath.

Many notes on the method on-line will fill you in on finer details, right into your face on the ubiquitous, smarming, 'jelling-bone'.

These techniques give you a plethora of choices, and now you are chained to domestica, you can



Oysters with  
lemon-lime caviar

*Spherification: A form of molecular food preparation that involves a reaction between sodium alginate and a calcium medium such as calcium lactate or calcium chloride.*

become culinary-anarchic and aesthetically "creative"! Beats another night of tooth stuffing' pasta-nosh.

Incidentally, notice how 'al dente' and gristly the mince they are flogging has become? More ligament than the red-stuff-of-the-muss.

'Moggie-nosh', the pet-tender kanga (jump-meat) is superior, compared to the muck the decedents of the knaves of the heavy-thumb, have graduated to serving.

Against this merde, I'm throwing in my bit, for what it's worth, on the matters of a decent seafood plate.

During the Vietnam years of sorrow and no dough times of the '60's, a bloke one day collared me and said,

"Oysters, you dig?" Well, I didn't, but I soon did.

"You shuck 80 dozen oysters, tray 'em three times a week and drive 'em as far south as Canberra. Bring me back the dough and I'll see you get enough to pay the landlord and the grocer and have a schooner or two on Friday arvo."

What could a man do, but keep on shucking? The sight of hungry bairns with a losing patience, and a now-about-to-be-materially-satisfied woman, took the sting out of the daily salt-lash, "Where's the dough and when...?" And so it was ever to be.

The Capo paradise! Keep on shucking!

### Oysters modern with popping bobo

Shuck a dozen or two oysters, save all the sea-liquor, put wet tissue paper over the survivors and fridge them (they will survive for days).

Blend the liquor with the appropriate alginate % and spices, set up the calcium bath, using a syringe or the now-available drip-tools.

Add lime or lemon to the alginate to give a working material and make your spheres. Watch the ph.

Wikipedia et el have the facts. Wash and refrigerate.

Serve the shucked crustaceans on a bed of ice shavings or a bed of butcher's salt, dress them with the spheres and add a flash of Worcestershire sauce and a veg-artifice: shredded diakon or ground wasabi.

Leg-wetting!

A happy whatever!

*If you want to share a Chrissy time with a bloke who is not a jerk, do email: [thewholeearthveg@gardener.com](mailto:thewholeearthveg@gardener.com)*



# Playfulness in therapy

Sometimes the therapeutic conversation gets heavy and stuck, and it's clear that talking about it won't loosen it up. Something else is required.

I have a little red and white striped string-covered ball that I keep in my room. Sometimes I'll pick it up and throw it to my client. Usually it meets them with delight and they'll throw it back and a little game begins. The whole atmosphere lifts and we laugh in our play. Sometimes the game releases tears amidst the laughter. Sometimes this is all that was needed to shift the sense of stuckness and to open the therapeutic conversation to move it to another level.

I have been interested in how this happens between people for a very long time. In fact I called my PhD thesis *Catching the Ball: constructing the reciprocity of embodiment* (available for reading through the thesis repository of Murdoch University, Western Australia) for the easy interactions that arises in non-serious and unconscious engagement between ourselves and ourselves and our environment.

The subtleties of this connection are not only intriguing but also very beautiful. There is flow, inhibition of flow, non-awareness and awareness: receiving and letting go, and interestingly all happening at the same time. Think, if you will, of a person throwing a ball, and the other person preparing to catch it, some of the ligaments and muscles in the bodies of both players are extended and some are retracted in preparation for the next throw/catch. This physical engagement mirrors the conversation between people: we speak, we listen, we prepare to speak again. There is give and take and give....

What arises in these little bursts of playfulness in therapy should not be confused with the speciality of play therapy. That is quite different and is usually done with children. The Australian Psychological Society defines play therapy as 'a powerful means of joining with the innate, creative, non-verbal capacities of children in order to engage and work therapeutically with them. It is a developmentally appropriate, evidence-based method of counselling younger clients.'

What I am writing about right now is just plain old playfulness that happens to arise between people within and outside the therapeutic situation. I also note that I do not do play therapy as I mostly work with adults,



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

leaving child psychotherapy to those who specialize in it.

Playfulness, of course, isn't just throwing a ball back and forth, it can arise in verbal humour, facial expression, mimicry, or anything else that is light, funny and spontaneous. Planning on playfulness will likely fall flat.

Playfulness can release a client's resistance to change. Playful silliness can create a sense of safety in the encounter with the therapist, and allows the client to relax and lose their tight anxiety, which is not a bad thing. Laughter is part of playfulness and that encourages the expression of a sense of togetherness.

Another beautiful thing about playfulness is that, in that looseness, it allows us to reframe therapy – and beyond therapy to experience life as entertaining, intellectually stimulating and interesting, such that we are better able to happily encounter complexity, without panicking.

Another side effect of playfulness is that it opens us to creative engagement in our world, including an increased desire for physical activity and the endorphins that are generated therein (excellent for healing depression). After we've engaged in little bouts of silliness a client often goes away to once again make music, paint and write, after sometimes years of creative drought.

I'm reminded of the use of laughter medicine in hospital settings, a delightful therapy begun by Patch Adams, an American medical doctor who is interested in healing the whole self and self in community. His Gesundheit (health) Institute has people going into hospitals dressed as clowns to share fun and laughter with their patients.

Perhaps that might be entertaining, but actually I don't much like the structured play of clowns and anyway, playfulness doesn't need to be an all-stops-out fanfare. A little bit of silly playfulness goes a long way, from the here and now of the therapeutic encounter to softening the edges of ordinary life.

# The law and bits of paper

All those years making brief submissions, saving the time of the court, doesn't prepare one for on-line assessed workshops.

Yesterday, from 9am to 4.30pm, I watched well-prepared lawyers give well-prepared answers to previously provided questions, occasionally risking a word or two of my own. I'm still to learn whether they'll let me act in the fraught and unprofitable world of Care and Protection.

When a presenter describes how a whole case can turn on a single piece of paper, my mind drifts back to the late 90s when I was a deep-tissue masseur called Sindhu.

Across the road from The Space, the Northern Rivers Conservatorium Arts Centre ('the Con') ran diploma courses in music, dance and drama, employing 35 teachers. They had 100 full-time students and lots of community classes.

It was rumoured that the reportedly National Party-aligned committee had plans for the site. Then someone found out that it was an Incorporated Association, which staff and students could all join, chuck out the

old committee, and sack the Director and Administrator (D&A). This they did.

Now they needed a free lawyer to defend the legal challenges of D&A who, late the night before the AGM, had allegedly been seen carrying heavy cartons down the back stairs.

I, a mere graduate, said I'd ask around. The victorious new committee and their friends ransacked the office, searching for evidence. It must have been exciting for them, but not the way you treat a potential crime scene.

Wroth Wall generously lent us the services of the wonderful Nat Meyer, his employed solicitor, who shortly afterwards, I heard, moved to the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre. Amazingly, he also found a pro-bono barrister. By now I'd been drafted onto the committee.

The first months were like fighting spot fires in a hot wind. Gradually other committee members, faced with or beaten back by the reality, went elsewhere. I was now called Principal Executive Officer. Fortunately, some remarkable people turned up, equally voluntarily, to do



Legal writes by John Adams

the actual work.

Turnover had dropped from \$800,000 to five in the year before the AGM. In 1998 it was down to three. We held it there for the next four years. All the staff and students were either musos, who tend to live in their heads; or dancers, in their bodies and emotions; or actors who seem, as a general rule, to have no idea who they are.

Negotiating with them and creditors, re-drafting business plans, re-accrediting courses, and generally running the place, was not always fun.

Teachers, for instance, were understandably really pissed off when we couldn't pay them for two whole weeks. The building developed serious cracks. The ATO was being difficult. If we lost in court, it was all over.

And the lawyers weren't positive. Detectives and forensic accountants hadn't found quite enough. The day before the trial I went through the old files again, spread out on the boardroom table.

Next morning, I found it, a single sheet, handwritten on letterhead, signed by A, confirming a loan of Con money to a staff member, misfiled in the time of chaos.

I rang Nat. His Honour was prepared to wait. Then the frantic drive to Byron, the precious letter handed to the barrister who showed it to the other side. They withdrew. The Con survived.

The document my lecturer talked about yesterday caused a child to live with her grandmother, instead of strangers, until she was 18. Without our document, thousands of children wouldn't have gone to the Con.

Now, when I walk past, 20 years later, I hear music.

# Spring: Medicine-making time

I love that word! Basically it just means to make into much smaller pieces.

To make into a tincture, the herb is covered with the extracting liquid, called the 'menstruum'. The varying methods involve the percentage of alcohol to be used, and the ratio of herb to menstruum.

The 'folk method', which is common in the US and designed for home manufacturing, simply means placing the comminuted herb in a large jar and covering generously with a spirit such as vodka.

This produces a viable but weak tincture, as the quantity of menstruum is excessive and the alcohol percentage is generalised and for many plants is insufficient to extract some active ingredients, for example volatile oils, from the plant.

For medicinal strength tinctures, a weight to volume ratio of 1:2 is recommended.

For example, 250g of fresh herb to 500ml of menstruum. In practice, 250g of a fresh leafy flowering herb is very bulky. It requires a weight to push and hold it down under the menstruum. It is important to avoid having the fresh herb material exposed to air.

I use quartz crystal as the weight, hoping there is an additional vibrational energy transferred to the tincture.

With some herbs, I use a 1:3 ratio if it is just not possible to cover the herb otherwise. Tinctures of roots easily will do 1:2 as they are more dense.

The issue I find the most perplexing is the strength of alcohol recommended for fresh plant tinctures. Most European traditions use an alcohol percentage that reflects the active constituents of the specific herb.

For example, a lower alcohol and higher water content for water-soluble components such as polysaccharides and starches, and a high alcohol content for glycosides and essential oils.

With fresh plant tinctures, the water content in the plant is taken into account with the calculation. The final alcohol content can be anywhere between 23% and 80%.

However, there is a method recommended by some US herbalist authors that specifies all fresh plant tinctures are made with full strength alcohol (ie 96%). They argue that all the soluble components of the plant are 'dessicated' ie. drawn out into solution, including the water-soluble components.

This is puzzling to me, as the methods are so different for some plants. I have noticed that the leftover herb

material can be crisp and seems quite 'spent'.

I have done comparisons, for example I made a Heartsease (*Viola tricolor*) tincture using the low alcohol percentage as recommended by the European system, and another sample using the high alcohol method. The stronger alcohol gave what seemed to be much more potent medicine from an organoleptic assessment (taste, smell, vibe).

However, I prefer a lower alcohol tincture for herbs that can be used directly on the skin, eg Ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*), as it is more soothing for irritations, bites and stings.

In next month's column, for holiday reading, I will present the medicinal properties of my Spring harvest plants including perilla, yarrow, houttuynia, heartsease, stevia and California poppy.

Trish Clough is a Lismore herbalist who has been practising for more than 30 years. She now conducts her own clinic practice in Club Lane in Lismore after owning 'Traditional Medicinals' for 20 years.

Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452-219-502 or email: [trishclough@internode.net.au](mailto:trishclough@internode.net.au) The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.



Mum and dad, say yes to Neverland

Tarot Musings  
by Grant Walker  
and Amy B

The Twins or The Lovers suggests that you're facing a choice and there's a good chance it's regarding an important relationship in your life; partner, lover, friend or family. You may be required to make a small sacrifice now, to get what you need in the long run.



Embrace the magic of Gemini's origin story, the begotten sons of Queen Leda of Sparta. Pollux, the son of almighty Zeus, by birthright a divine god alongside his half-brother Castor who possessed no such title; the mere mortal son of Tyndareus, King of Sparta. Where Pollux was permitted to reside in the ethereal, Castor was left to battle it out upon the fields of earth.

Upon Castor's death and after the desperate pleadings of Pollux, Castor was eventually immortalised with great sacrifice to Pollux himself, together they form the constellation that we identify today as Gemini.

You are now asked to make a similar sacrifice, as Pollux gave up half his godly inheritance, you will be asked to temporarily give up your earthly experience to the heavens above, retire your presence on earth for a while, allow yourself to ascend into the clouds to take the first step towards your own immortality.

As an adult, our inner god is continually knocked back, similarly to a child being told, not now son, not now darling. Now is the time to say yes to that inner child. Without shame or self-preservation, adorn yourself in Peter Pan's tunic and prepare to fly off to Neverland.

Leave your work, leave your house, leave the television; literally pick up your child from grandma, from their room, from school, day care, from wherever they may be and do something crazy today. Do something that no-one would expect of you, don't be satisfied until someone exclaims, "Who is this person?" When you hear the words, "You're losing it!" know that you're on the right path.

Embrace the sanctuary of child-like play, don't be scared or anxious as you sit on the ground with your child and start to draw, paint and play without

mind but with presence, allow the experience to elevate your consciousness out of the mundane, play until the wonder of the experience starts to well up tears within your eyes.

As your child recovers from the day's play, sit and meditate; allow your heart to bask in the glow of pure interaction with the most important person in your life, allow your tears to form and enjoy the feeling of them falling from your eyes, caressing your cheeks and covering your face, do not wipe them away, embrace the entire experience. Tears will soon become your new currency and much like fiat; the more you let go, the more you will get.

In the spirit of Thoth and Hermes, permit yourself to take a pen, yes you are worthy, in time you will be able to describe the feelings and emotions that your child gifts you. Now turn to a partner or friend with a quiet face and expose your vulnerability, move towards their arms and embrace their love and adoration; rest your mind in their pure acceptance.

There is no shame in exposing our emotions to people who care about us; we must remember that our loved ones adore us just the way we are. Our partners, friends and family provide a safe sanctuary for our vulnerable emotions.

Within our vulnerable emotions lie the foundations for a path to our own salvation. We must peel back the thick skin that life has layered upon our experience, we must expose the seeds of the divine fruit that reside within our souls; these are the Seeds of Initiation and they reside within us all.

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

Wisdom and lessons

by Donna Conolly

It's that time of the year again where we tend to get reflective and introspective. Counting our wins and losses. I prefer to think of them as Wisdom and lessons.

Personally, I have had a pretty amazing year, overall. Full of learning, healing and development, on all levels; body, mind and spirit. With unexpected twists and turns, as life should be!

My biggest keyword this year has been "trust";

Trusting that my higher self signed up to be here at this time of great change and evolution. Trusting that I am surrounded by the right animals and people at the right moment.

Knowing that they will show up when I am ready and I will be divinely inspired/guided when need be.

My greatest unexpected moment/gift this year: one fateful June morning at sunrise, a gorgeous doggo appeared at the gate, prompting the name of Dougie-Ra; Ra being the Egyptian Sun god.

We went to great lengths to find his previous people, to no avail.

Using animal communication, we figured out he was a farm doggo, that he had lived wild for a time. He made his way here looking for a "lady" friend.

In the meantime, he had completely captured our hearts with his sweet and quirky ways.

I am now his official guardian, with help from some amazing people, we got all his medical needs taken care of, and we are currently training him to become a personal therapy dog.

He is a beautiful soul and there have definitely been some moments of joy and learning. Animal communication

has helped so much with his integration and healing.

I encourage you to look back over the last year and see how far you've come!

Here's a list to prompt some reflective meditation or journaling. Sometimes the act of writing things down makes more sense of the journey and deepens your understanding of the "what's":

- What are your keyword/s for 2021?
- Was there a theme?
- What went well?
- What could do with a tweak or complete overhaul?
- What will you take into the new year and what will you leave behind?
- What no longer serves your highest purpose? (These can be habits, lifestyle choices, attitudes, people and/or possessions. Sometimes they can simply be a new way of being and processing thoughts)
- What was your biggest miracle/unexpected moment?

I'm all for self development and creating a "better" you. However, one of my biggest lessons has been to allow time for integration and feeling into the changes, exploring and tweaking as necessary; trying to remain as centred as possible and be able to ground our energy regardless of the situation.

Don't be afraid of change, if you embrace it, things may just turn out better than you can imagine!

I would love to send out a huge heartfelt *thank you* to all our amazing clients, pets and people.

It has been a huge privilege to witness the growth and development! These memories will remain with me forever.

With a special mention to all the beautiful souls that have chosen to transition this year, including the brave guardians that have been touched by these deep moments.



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We have gift vouchers available from \$70, a perfect option for the people and pets in your life that have everything.

An animal communication session can assist with behavioral issues, dietary concerns, allergies and anxiety.

Most of all communicating with your pets will deepen your connection and help you with making decisions regarding their future... understanding the lessons and creating a more harmonious relationship for everyone.

Most of all, have a lovely holiday season. Stay safe and please be kind to one another. I look forward to connecting in the New Year.

Dora's last word:

*"Dougie has helped me find my inner Puppy again, and the biscuits! I really like having him around, I'm happy to share my toys and mum with him, and he is very handsome!"*

Big love, Donna, Dora and Dougie-Ra

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



View from the loo  
by Stuart McConville

COP OUT 26 was held recently in Scotland and the kilts were whirling with all the gaseous eruptions from various world leaders venting their sinuous calls to protect the planet from human induced climate change.

The outcome of COP OUT 26 was increasing global temperature by nearly 2°C by 2050. This is not nearly good enough. It doesn't sound like much, but every miniscule increase is a vast increase in the amount of energy that the earth has to find ways to disperse.

The relief valve for Gaia will be more frequent and more intense storms, searing heat waves and droughts,

Kilty farts

cyclones and floods. This is the legacy that we will leave our children. Imagine the survivor generations living beneath the earth and foraging at night, and you won't be far off.

As Australians, we have absolutely nothing to be proud of when it comes to our mitigation strategy. We let SANTOS (the methane consortium) lead the way for Australia at COP OUT 26, a clear indicator of where our federal government is planning on taking us.

The giant junkie called consumerism is hell-bent on squirting fix upon fix of fossil fuels into its veins in an effort to convince itself that all is well and the future has a smile on its face. What an illusion!

The National Party is much to blame for holding back climate policy. The writing was on the wall many years ago and the Nats were busy having cocktails with their mates in the fossil fuel sector.

We have missed out on a transition strategy that could have placed Australia as a world leader in emissions reduction

technology, instead the Nationals threw spanner after spanner, then the whole tool box into the works. As a consequence, we now have our work cut out for us and there must be reductions in our quality of life.

The harder the choices we impose on ourselves now, the less likely our grandchildren will suffer. The time to have our cake and eat it too is over, thanks to lousy politicians and rich, clever fossil fuel company lobbyists.

I have always been an advocate of starting with the things we have direct control over in our lives and working outward from there.

If you are living out of town and have a flush toilet, you are personally contributing to the methane in the atmosphere. The septic tank vents this methane up a flue near your house and it adds to the concentration of methane in the atmosphere.

Methane is the worst greenhouse gas. You could be capturing that carbon and storing it in the earth... that's right, carbon



sequestration actually works when you have a compost loo.

If you are not thinking very carefully about all your choices when using fossil fuel, and that includes electricity, then you are part of the problem not the solution.

Boil as much water as you need, not a full jug every time. Get a car with a smaller engine and set out your timeframe to transition to an electric vehicle. Limit your shopping trips to once every two weeks, learn to store food, preserve food.

There are so many ways to make a difference and as of right now it is really up to us to decide what our kids' future will look like.

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



# Lessons learnt from our horses

by Les Rees

I often find myself wondering how horsemen and women view their horses.

What role do they play in their lives and how do they view their relationships with them?

Social media are full of comments on training, health and feeding tips along with the latest gadgets to control them as well as a constant stream of marketing the latest fashions incorporating new colours and designs of horse and matching jockey attire.

All of these things can be interesting depending on what you're looking for but perhaps we should be giving more credence to the happiness of our horses. It's more important for them to feel safe and healthy, to be fed appropriately and to be treated with kindness and understanding.

The idea of kindness can be interpreted in so many ways, because we all have our own ideas about how to define it. I personally think that we should be thinking along the lines of shared obligations to create happiness. If we are to cross the barriers of cross-species communication, we must be prepared to learn from each other and quite frankly I see too many people who fail in every aspect of

this. Given that horses are so much bigger and stronger than us, it's hardly surprising that many humans feel the need to gain absolute control over them.

Humans and horses have shared a long history together but it all seems very one sided to me. People see them as powerful creatures and having control over them feeds the egos of those who constantly create more difficult challenges for their horses, often to their detriment. The injuries caused through these so called sporting activities have created a massive industry for those offering treatments. I think we should go back to basics and ask some important questions concerning equine welfare to enable the best outcomes for the next generation of children and their equine partners.

Like us, horses have different personalities and it is up to us to decide how to create a happy life together. Maybe you would be happier with one that has a similar personality to your own. Personally I prefer working with ones that present challenges because it allows the horses and I the freedom to create ways that feed our happiness together.

To do this I spend a lot of time just being with them to see how they react to things



and to understand what makes them happy. I firmly believe that all our animals need to be able to express their personalities in order to teach us what's important for their wellbeing. The positive nature born out of trust in one another is the single most important way of feeding a perfect relationship.

I would like to set up a challenge to get the dialogue started between you and your horse. The idea is to note what your horse has to teach you.

- What lessons have you learnt whilst hanging out together?
- How does it make you feel?
- What do you understand about the language of your horse?

- Define the ways your horse demonstrates that he/she is happy to be with you.
  - Has the horse shown any discomfort about the way you act around him/her?
  - What activities do you engage in together?
  - What games have you created based on what your horse enjoys?
- Sometimes when we take the time to write the answers to these questions, it gives us further food for thought about our mindfulness with the animals we share our lives with.

Les Rees is an Equine Naturopath and Sports Therapist, and runs Horsetail Herbs, email: [horsetailherbs@bigpond.com](mailto:horsetailherbs@bigpond.com)

## Seven reasons to change to bitless bridles

by Suzy Maloney

**1. So you can ride safely and kindly** – Bitless bridles have been used extensively for over 20 years. They have stood the test of time and have shown to be safe. Stories of horses bolting, bucking, rearing etc. are about horses wearing bits. Bits are an unacknowledged cause of loss of control and accidents. They are not a guarantee of safety, in fact they are quite the opposite. However, most equestrians grow up being indoctrinated with bit use to 'control' the horse. The bitless bridle provides a safe and effective way to ride horses while also being kind. The evidence is out there, for our horse's sake, it's time we made the shift.

**2. To remove the bit pain from your horse's life** – Bits are a pain-based method of control used since 3000BC. The focused forces of a metal rod inside the horse's mouth create pain. The amount of pain varies according to style of bit, rider skill and horses training level, but there is always pain. Studies have found bit-induced lesions varying from mild to severe. When we put the metal rod inside the mouth, it is out of sight out of mind. However, for the horse it is very much in their mind, causing pain and associated problems.

**3. To prevent bone spur growth from bit damage** – Bits places pressure on the horse's mandible, which is covered by a soft, wet, mucous membrane a few millimetres thick. Repeated pressure traumatises the bone, which remodels in response, producing bone spurs. These are upright bony growths which then have contact with the bit, causing more pain. A survey by Dr Cook of 66 mandibles

showed bone spur formation of the bars in 62% of domestic horses. Free-roaming horses showed none.

**4. To improve your relationship with your horse** – The bit blocks the goal of achieving rider-horse harmony. For horses, people give love and affection on the ground, then ride and create pain. To cope, horses may internalise. It's only when you remove the bit and pain that you realise how huge it has been for the horse. Most riders do not want to hurt their horse. They believe they must because it has been indoctrinated into them. When riders no longer inflict pain, they feel more positive about themselves and their horse riding.

**5. To remove negative behaviours created by the bit** – Dr Cook identified 69 aberrant behaviours as being bit-induced. Removal of the bit reduced these behaviours by 87%. Horses try and tell us by lifting the head when bridling, being mouth sensitive, head shaking, chewing the bit and other bit aversions. Potentially dangerous behaviours reported are "fright", "stiff necked" and "loss of control". This can express as bolting, bucking, rearing, etc. Bit pain behaviour often goes unrecognised, being considered 'normal' behaviour in horses. It's only after the bit is removed that it becomes evident.


**6. So your horse can breathe properly when exercising** – When a horse runs freely, their lips are sealed. A bit stops the sealing and maintaining of a negative atmospheric pressure in the oral cavity. This is necessary for stabilizing the soft palate on the root of the tongue and ensuring its air-tight seal around the larynx, providing



an unobstructed throat airway. Lack of sealing may produce a number of pathologies including 'bleeding' and collapse of the upper respiratory tract. Bits trigger digestive system reflexes such as chewing, salivation and swallowing during exercise, rather than the respiratory reflexes that the horse requires.

**7. To help create a kinder and more compassionate world** – To be compassionate means to not knowingly cause pain to another being, and actively assist others to live with less pain and difficulty. Welfare issues created by the bit include the pain itself, but also potentially breathlessness, anxiety, and fear. A horse naturally runs with the head and neck extended, lips sealed, teeth closed, mouth dry, and the throat airway stable and unobstructed. None of these are available to a horse with a bit in the mouth. Removing the bit from the horses' mouth, is in line with living a kind and compassionate life. Kindness never goes unnoticed.

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Dip Clin Hypnotherapy, BA, BA (Hons), M. Couns, PhD  
**Counselling, psychotherapy, clinical hypnotherapy, supervision**  
Monday – Saturday: Clinic in Lismore Heights  
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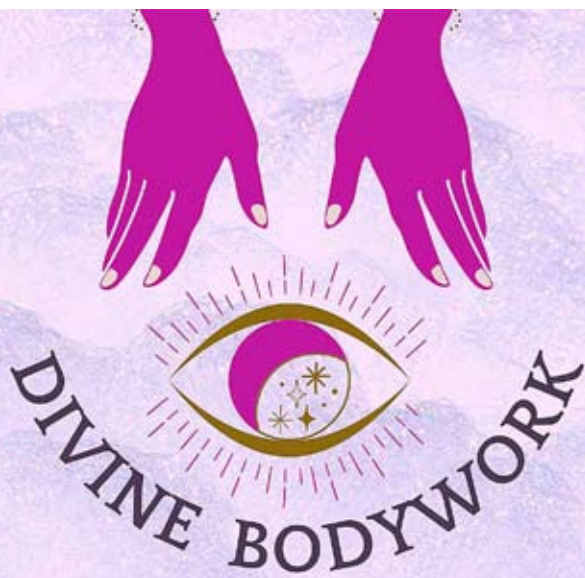
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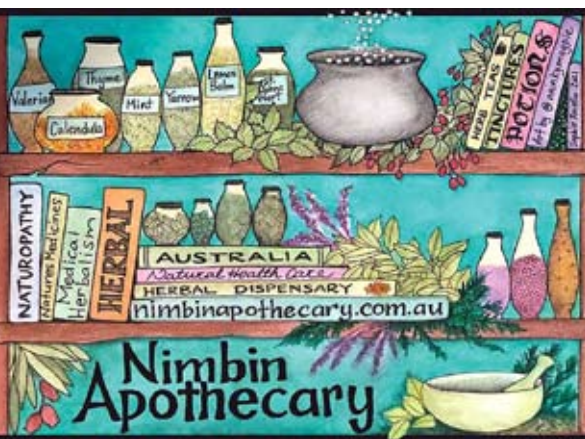




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# The first days after birth

I've lost count of the number of women that have said "No-one told me it would be like this." The early days after birth can feel like being thrown in the deep end. There is usually so much focus on the birth that postpartum is often overlooked. There is also so much focus on the new baby that the new mother can feel overlooked.

Well-meaning friends and family usually want to see the baby and bring gifts for the baby. The needs of new parents are often forgotten or underestimated.

There are huge changes happening in those early days. Some knowledge of things to expect can help this time go more smoothly. This article highlights some of the changes happening for the new mother.



by Kirrah Stewart



1 in 7 women experiencing the more serious postpartum depression it's important to seek professional help if symptoms don't lift within a couple of weeks of the birth.

Two important hormones involved with breastfeeding are; prolactin and oxytocin. Prolactin and oxytocin are released in response to nipple stimulation (for example, the baby suckling or using a pump).

Prolactin helps with milk production and oxytocin helps with the milk release. Oxytocin can be enhanced by skin-to-skin contact, cuddling, warmth and support.

## The milk

It's quite normal that the breasts become full, heavy and slightly tender after birth. As the breasts

adjust to how much milk to make for the baby, the uncomfortable fullness will subside. It's also common for one breast (often the right side) to make more than the other.

Changes in the milk occur quite rapidly after birth. The first milk is called colostrum and you may have heard it referred to as 'liquid gold'. This milk usually transitions to more mature milk within a few days of birth.

The volume of milk produced also increases to meet the needs of the baby. The newborn drinks about 7-14ml of colostrum milk at each feed in the early days (around 60ml/day) and this increases to about 500ml/day around day 5.

## Physically healing

The placenta leaves a large area of the womb that needs

to be healed after birth. Rest is crucial for healing. It's important to take time to recover after giving birth.

I like the saying "Five days in bed, five days on the bed and five days around the bed."

Your body (particularly your pelvic floor) will thank you if you can take at least two weeks to rest and minimise movements.

The early days after birth can be really intense but knowing what to expect and setting yourself up with good support will make the world of difference to how you transition into motherhood.

*Kirrah is a postpartum doula and lactation counsellor supporting families in the Northern Rivers. To download a free natural birth checklist head to: [www.doulawisdom.com](http://www.doulawisdom.com) or text Kirrah 0429-308 851.*

# Bowen therapy for the hay fever season

For about 20% of the Australian population, hay fever means feeling blocked up, sneezing and keeping that box of tissues handy!

Hay fever, or more correctly allergic rhinitis, is an allergic reaction to plant or tree pollen. If we want to be really correct, "hay fever" is caused by grass pollen only, and reaction to other plant or tree pollen is really "pollinosis" – but let's stick with the commonly used name of "hay fever".

Some people may have hay fever seasonally, when air-borne pollens are at their peak. Others suffer hay fever symptoms all year round (perennial allergic rhinitis).

Many with hay fever seem predisposed for more frequent sinus infections, and often suffer fatigue from resultant poor quality sleep.

## What causes hay fever?

It is caused by an immune response to inhaled pollen.

The fine hairs and mucus in the nose trap pollens and dust, to prevent entry into the lungs. Those with hay fever have an allergic reaction to those particles. The immune system treats those harmless particles as potentially dangerous, and the body tries to attack them. The nasal passages then produce more mucus to expel the particles, and become inflamed.

The time of year when people suffer depends on the type of pollen they are allergic to. Pollen seems to make its impact known, from high to low. Tree pollen arrives first, in late winter. Grass pollen, from just above the ground, is more evident during spring and into



by Sonia Barton

summer. The ground-dwelling weed pollens impact hay fever sufferers in autumn.

So, hay fever can have a long season, depending the type of pollen that you're allergic to.

## Do you suffer with these symptoms?

The main symptoms that present with hay fever include:

- A runny, and congested nose;
- Sneezing;
- Eyes become irritated, watery, itchy and red;
- Itchy ears, nose and throat; and
- Headaches.

If symptoms differ from these, it's best to seek medical advice in case the issue is not actually hay fever!

For most people, avoiding exposure to pollen is their key form of defence.

Staying indoors on windy days or when there is a high pollen count is often key. Keeping windows closed and car air conditioning on air recirculation

helps, as does showering when arriving home and rinsing eyes, and always carrying a supply of tissues.

Medications won't cure the allergies, but many can relieve symptoms.

## How can Bowen therapy help?

Bowen therapy is a very gentle form of bodywork. Small, gentle, precise moves are made on muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves, triggering the body to begin a healing process.

While most commonly known for helping back pain and postural issues, Bowen therapy also helps calm the body's nervous system. The entire body is influenced during a Bowen treatment, through restoring balance in the autonomic nervous system.

The Bowen moves prompt a shift from the stressed, sympathetic "fight or flight" mode, to parasympathetic "rest and repair" dominance.

Specific moves for targeted support of the respiratory system and sinuses have helped many sufferers. I use lymphatic drainage on the face as part of the treatment, which is very soothing and healing.

Within a few treatments, many people feel a difference that lasts for months, being able to enjoy life in the outdoors again.

I'd like to wish everyone who reads my column a wonderful Christmas, full of joy and happiness, and wishing you abundance and good health in 2022.

*Sonia Barton is a Bowen and Reiki therapist. She can be contacted on 0431-911-329 or at: [www.bowenenergywork.com.au](http://www.bowenenergywork.com.au)*



# Dealing with stress

Being in a situation that we consider to be stressful creates many different emotional and mental situations within our being. Feelings and thoughts of anger, resentment, hostility and fear of loss are excellent at interfering with the positive power that we are capable of as human beings; not only mentally and emotionally, but also physically.

This is because when the adrenal glands are doing their dance of fight or flight and we cannot, or will not run from the danger, the physical body, due to continually being in a state of anti-survival, creates all sorts of imbalances and ill health. Not the least being inflammation of the gut and muscles.

There is an old saying: “It is not what we are dealt in life that causes the problem. It is how we handle the issue that creates the problem.”

So, being ‘cool’ no matter what, is a good exercise to practise, except that most of us are carrying around in our subconscious a remembrance of unpleasant happenings from the past that may be triggered again by what appears to be a similar situation. Me included.

Nevertheless, it isn’t the cleverest of moves to allow the past to rule the present, unless past experience has improved one’s quality of life.

Continuing to mentally and emotionally sit in a past that did not improve one’s quality of life is similar to still sitting in the prison of helplessness that one felt when the awful thing was happening, back

then. All the same, returning to feelings of love and trust from a background where neither was present is perhaps the greatest challenge we will ever face on this journey called life.

So what to do to return to ‘cool’? Meditation, unfortunately, has been linked to all sorts of religious practices, and at the very least brings thoughts of needing to become vegetarian or – Ganesh forbid! – having to wear eastern fashions, like sarongs on men.

Not that I am against either. Men look very sexy in a sarong. And vegetarian food, if carefully combined, is very good for the liver. But neither is needed when one realises that breathing exercises and learning to quiet a mind (which dances around like a mad monkey), are tools that belong to everyone, no matter their religious or philosophical beliefs. And I am totally convinced that breathing exercises and meditation make us stronger and better able to cope with the insanities of everyday living.

Wim Hof breathing is a good beginning. Basically, it involves breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth for a count of 20 or 30, after which one expels all of one’s breath through the mouth and holds out for as long as one can, before taking in a deep breath through the nose and holding for a count of 15.

The breathing in and out for the count of 30 is executed only once, and the holding out and in of the breath is

executed three times, before repeating the whole exercise once again. It takes about ten minutes, will change the flavour of your day and is an excellent exercise for increasing lung capacity. It will also set you up for an easy flow into a deeper quietening of the mind if one chooses to go there.

If interested, Wim Hof breathing is explained more fully on the internet. Along with my usual healing work of removing pain and stiffness from the back, shoulders, neck, jaw and limbs, I have a couple of techniques I use when it is appropriate to remove trauma that is trapped in the mind and body of a client.

I am not a hypnotherapist, but I have discovered in my work that the techniques of pranic healing, emotional freedom technique and cutting the ties that bind, can create a noticeable improvement in the emotional wellness of the beings, who give permission to receive these techniques while on my table.

Of course, because we are all individuals, the improvement is different for everyone.

Still, I wish to add that being willing to release the past is not a bad thing. It actually benefits all. Those who caused us pain are released from their burden of bad behaviour and we are released from the burden of their bad behaviour.

I say this, because sometimes people feel guilty about releasing the pain that was unwittingly caused by



by Tonia Haynes

those they love. Fortunately, these techniques only remove the negative memories, not one’s loving connection.

A final discovery that I think is relevant in this vaccination-no vaccination conflict, which is colouring all our lives with the grey cloud of emotional uncertainty.

Some years ago a most important being from this area contracted Q Fever from a tick. It was a time when the western medicos denied the existence of this disease in Australia and if it had not been for his loving and feisty wife, plus medical science already accepted, the man would have surely died. And certainly, he would have been sadly missed.

They have recently created a vaccination for Q Fever and even though it is still not believed that Q Fever comes from ticks, only cattle (go figure that one), the being in question believes that if the vaccination had been available then, he would not have needed to face the trauma of a major operation and potential death.

Love, light and kindness to all.

Phone Tonia for an appointment on 0439-794-420.



## Natural Law

by Helene Collard

Many of us sense the beginning of a new path. It is as if a major season or cycle has ended, and with it, many things are falling away.

There are some things in life, that we only journey with for a set period of time. This is happening now. We are at the fork in the road, and as you continue on your path, you are leaving some things behind.

As you lighten your load, give thanks for all that have journeyed with you thus far. Acknowledge the deepest blessings and the deepest of pain – all which hold the potential, to teach us how to deeply love ourselves.

New and expansive terrains of self-love, is what this time is ALL about. It all begins with connecting with, and appreciating, and loving up your body, in every-which-way you can.

Our bodies are inherently connected to the land – to nature. The more you connect-love-appreciate your body, the more you will be drawn to be with the land. Your body houses your soul, and with the change of life ‘season’ it’s time for a cleanse of some sort!

It may be a decluttering of ‘stuff’ from your home, or a healing diet cleanse to clear your body of toxins and revitalise your organs. For some, it may be a screen-time cleanse.

I have found that not taking any screens into my bedroom, has significantly reduced my screen-time, and improved my rest and sleep!

Others may find being more selective with what you watch or read, will give you a welcome break from certain content. You decide

what area is calling for a cleanse, and go for it!

It’s a perfect time to open your arms to receive all the new guidance, support, assistance and protection here for you, at the beginning of this new cycle.

Trust, and leave behind all that feels heavy. Learn to pack light. There is much wisdom and magic to guide you, however, you must surrender to avail yourself of its full potential.

Be gentle with yourself, focus on each step, and not too far ahead. Focus on taking very good care of your body - invite-in pleasure.

There will be more significant changes coming, so the more you are present, and internally resourced, the steadier you will sail through the storms ahead.

*This edition of Natural Law is dedicated to Mother Earth. When our bodies are well, Mother Earth is well. When we are sick, Mother Earth is sick. May we walk gently on the land, and learn to love more deeply.*

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## Finding the values in our life

This month I have an exercise for you, if you’re brave enough to take it on. It is quite simple. It helps you see what you truly value in your life: the importance of values.

The values we hold are very important, because they generate our beliefs about the world we live in and these in turn create the behaviours we use to interact with our world. Different values generate different beliefs, and result in the actions we see expressed in the world.

If values vary greatly between individuals it is likely that conflict will ensue.

**Step 1** for you now, is to make a list of the values (say about ten) you hold to be important for you. There is no right and wrong answers here. This is just information.

I’ll list a few values that you may want to consider in your list to get you started. Remember, values are what you hold to be important for you. Integrity, relationship, freedom, fun, wealth, community, health, happiness, family, security, work, peace, contribution, recognition, responsibility and creativity.

**Step 2** is to rank your value list from most important at #1 to the least important at #10 or so. To do this, take the first value you wrote down, let’s say it was integrity. Now



by Peter Ganser  
NLP Master Practitioner

compare this to the next on your list and ask, “Is integrity more important than wealth?”

If you answer yes, then integrity stays at the top of the list and then you ask the same for the next in the list, family. If you answer is “no”, then family moves to the top of the list. Continue this process until you have compared each value with the others and ranked them.

**Now, step 3** requires that you make estimates of how much time (in

action and thought) and how much money you spend on each of the values you have listed. Use a percentage (guess it) of what you would spend in a month or a year on each one.

You may find that some items require time and not money and vice-versa.

Set up a table like the one below.

Rank	Value	\$spent	Time	Total
1	Family	30%	10%	40
2	Health			
3	Learning			
4	Contribution			
5	Work			

And so on to the end of your list.

**Step 4** is to look at the results. The larger the number in the total column the more you spend your resource on these values. Does your perception of your value ranking match the resource spent? If it does, congratulations, you are among the few who are aware of your deeper self. If not, congratulations, you are aware now of where you can begin to bring yourself into balance with your deeper self.

Send me an email through my website: <https://peterganser.com.au> or phone 0444-561-541 and let me know if this exercise was insightful for you.