

ACTIVATE YOUR INNER HEALING \* BENEFITS OF FINDING YOUR TRIBE

# pathways

to family wellness™

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.  
HUMAN RIGHTS VS.  
CDC CORRUPTION

*You're Not Allowed  
to Not Allow Me:  
Reclaim the  
Power of Birth*



**Astroturf**  
*Don't Be Fooled by  
Fake Grassroots*

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# pathways to family wellness™

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PATHWAYS TO FAMILY WELLNESS is an award-winning quarterly publication offering parents thought-provoking articles and resources to make conscious, informed choices for their families' well-being.

The individual articles and links to healthcare information in PATHWAYS TO FAMILY WELLNESS are based on the opinions and perspectives of their respective authors.

The information provided is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified healthcare professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is presented as a sharing of knowledge and information.

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Photo by Melanie Ohm

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*Be a part of Pathways! We love to hear from you.*

If you have stories and photos to share about pregnancy, birth, family wellness lifestyle choices, or healthy recipes and nutrition ideas, please contact us by e-mailing [editor@pathwaystofamilywellness.org](mailto:editor@pathwaystofamilywellness.org).

# QUESTION AUTHORITY

## Our Right to Make Informed, Conscious Choices



I grew up in a family and a generation that believed in America, its Constitution and our Bill of Rights. We had a framed Declaration of Independence in our living room for years. We were taught that tyranny was not tolerable and authority that overstepped its bounds should be questioned and held accountable (and, yes, even rebelled against). We looked up to our forefathers, and honored their principles of sovereign human rights. We trusted in freedom of speech—the inalienable right to express perspectives and opinions for intelligent discussion, debate and resolution. We held dear our right and responsibility to make informed, conscious choices.

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*

—THOMAS JEFFERSON  
*The Declaration of Independence*

Then somewhere in the fear-based myriad of selective education, contrived crises and censored news, individuals became numbed and forfeited their autonomous responsibility to discern what is moral and ethical to societal institutions.

In PATHWAYS we frequently cover the importance of informed, conscious choice relating to many aspects of health in pregnancy, birth and childhood, and we strive to offer the information that has been intentionally filtered out of mainstream media. In this issue we are looking into some relevant concerns relating to vaccines, probably the most controversial and censored topic facing parents today. And instead of honestly and ethically evaluating this scientific evidence, the powers-that-be continue to intimidate and downright suppress all sides, and all data, that go against their agenda.

Last year, when the reports of Dr. William Thompson, a whistleblower at the Centers for Disease Control, were completely ignored by mainstream media, it became pitifully evident that vital information was being intentionally censored. Those who managed to bring this information to the surface were ridiculed as “conspiracy theorists” and “cranks.” These labels and fear tactics, with which so many have been indoctrinated, overtook the ethical sensibility and truth-seeking that is necessary for an informed public to emerge.

Very recently, however, some people have brought this issue to a more prominent light. U.S. Congressman Bill Posey quoted Thompson on the floor of the House of

Representatives, charging that the CDC intentionally destroyed research findings that indicated that the MMR vaccine caused a huge risk of autism in African-American boys when given before the age of 3 years. Fortunately, Dr. Thompson kept copies of these records, and pressure for an investigation is underway. Will this be the trigger to wake up the American public?

*If a Nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be... If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed.*

—THOMAS JEFFERSON

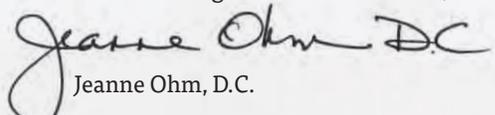
As parents whose duty it is to protect and guard our children, we have the right and the responsibility to make freely informed, conscious choices based on all the information available. The AMA declares that it is the legal and ethical obligation of practitioners to present the medical facts accurately to the patient or person responsible for the patient’s care. If, however, relevant data is being withheld from the practitioner, and therefore the public, then the special-interest groups withholding this information are creating conditions of ignorance for tyranny to exist, risking and endangering people of all beliefs and all walks of life.

*The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions that I wish it to be always kept alive.*

—THOMAS JEFFERSON

PATHWAYS magazine is published by the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association, whose policy is based on informed consent: “The ICPA respects each individual’s responsibility to make informed, conscious choices in all aspects of their chosen healthcare.” We strive to bring essential information to parents, including that which appears to be intentionally withheld from the public. With this issue, we hope to empower our readers to become informed, question authority, and to exercise their sovereign rights for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

For the raising of the consciousness,

  
Jeane Ohm, D.C.



# MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM FEAR TO

# Courage



By Paul Lenda

**M**any souls around the world today are still living much of their lives in the state of fear. It's a sad thing, but it's a reality that can be seen all around us. Many systems within society—social, political, religious, and more—perpetuate the energy of fear, and such systems will continue as long as the consciousness of courage does not exist within us.

By having courage, we are able to stop experiencing the fear perpetuated by those systems and take off the illusory shackles they impose.

The transition from fear to courage is a very big step and often requires much effort and energy, but it is entirely possible with a little determination and perhaps some external support. Not only do we benefit when we confront our inherited fears, but so does society as a whole. The less the systems within our cultures and societies use fear to maintain power, the quicker they will disappear into the sands of time, liberating consciousness wherever it's imprisoned.

Fear limits the growth of our personality and inevitably leads to a nature of inhibition and repression. When we exist in a state of fear, we put up an impenetrable boundary between ourselves and our own self-actualization.

It takes a bit of energy to transcend this level of consciousness, which is why some people gravitate toward

those who seem to have conquered fear and who offer to lead them out of the slavery that it holds. Unfortunately, these individuals are often oppressive, totalitarian leaders who take advantage of those who follow this logic.

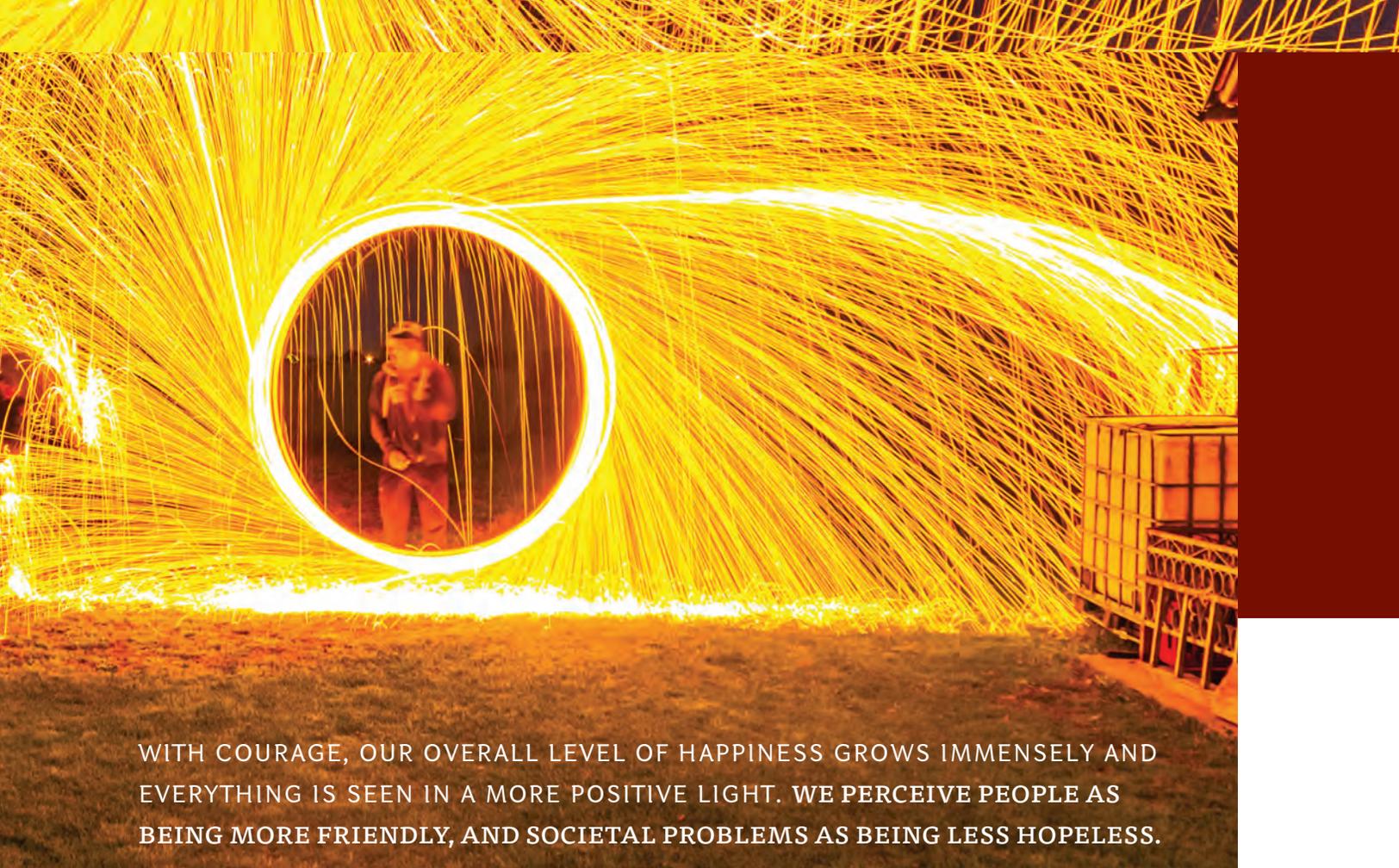
It is unfortunate, but the subjective consciousness state of fear is a limiting, prevailing and habitual state of expectancy that can be projected onto any and all aspects of our lives. Stress becomes the primary byproduct of the fear and creates its own problems, too many to mention here.

## **Embodying Courage**

The perpetuation of fear will be stopped in its tracks once we embody the consciousness of courage. Courage allows for exploration and accomplishment; it focuses our awareness on exciting, stimulating and challenging parts of life. Progress occurs when courage is emboldened.

Courage provides a passionate willingness to experience wonderful things that have not been explored before. Fear has been faced head-on thanks to a significantly higher level of energy, and any previous hindrances are gone. Self-esteem goes through the roof because there is a self-reinforcing sense of "I can do this." Productivity soars to new heights.

In courage, we feel enhanced confidence within our beings. There is an empowerment of the self, thanks to the realization that we are not dependent on external



WITH COURAGE, OUR OVERALL LEVEL OF HAPPINESS GROWS IMMENSELY AND EVERYTHING IS SEEN IN A MORE POSITIVE LIGHT. WE PERCEIVE PEOPLE AS BEING MORE FRIENDLY, AND SOCIETAL PROBLEMS AS BEING LESS HOPELESS.

factors. We have had everything we needed within ourselves the whole time. Freedom is finally experienced as the shackles of fear are taken off and thrown away.

The significant shift from fear to courage allows us to be able to work on manifesting our inner potential. This potential can be aligned with a sense of our overall mission in life that will be our primary focus from then on. This is not possible if we have a consciousness of fear, since fear will inhibit any action toward manifesting such goals.

With courage, our overall level of happiness grows immensely and everything is seen in a more positive light. We perceive people as being more friendly, and societal problems as being less hopeless. Courage shifts many other positions of awareness. The evolution of consciousness from fear to courage can change our lives in such a dramatic way that we feel like we're living in a different reality.

### **Taking Responsibility**

There is one factor to be mindful of beyond all others if we wish to make the transition from having fear to having courage: accepting personal responsibility. This critical action requires that we get rid of the idea that we are a victim of a perpetrator. We must transcend all social belief systems based on the suppositions of blame and excuses so that we can shift away from fear.

None of this is easy. Courage requires a higher input of energy than fear does. Yet whether it is through our inner determination or the support of others, this critical transition is an obtainable reality.

Understanding the differences between these two states of consciousness is important before the process can begin, so that we know what we're working with. This can take a day or it can take a lifetime. Once it occurs, the sense of self-empowerment will be the satisfaction we need in order to accomplish a most fundamental self-realization. ☺



*Paul Lenda is a conscious evolution guide, life coach, and co-founder of SHIFT>. Author of The Creation of a Consciousness Shift, he wishes to provide an integral role in the positive social transformation of humanity. Paul has degrees in business and psychology, and has taken part in extensive spiritual practice. He has a drive for esoteric knowledge and wishes to see and understand the wider horizon of reality. A gifted speaker at events, Paul has had his articles published in magazines and journals around the world. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*



# UNCHECKED POWER

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Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s speech  
on the corruption surrounding  
the CDC's vaccine division





the federal government orders people to buy. There's no advertising, there's no market, the patents never expire, and [they] can't be sued. So no matter how badly [they] make that product, no matter how many defects it has in it, nobody can ever hold [them] accountable. So they began making these vaccines and adding them to the schedule. When a pharmaceutical company adds that vaccine to the schedule, the value of it to that company can [increase] as much as a billion dollars.

We would expect, and we would hope, that the advisory committees that make the decision to add new vaccines to that schedule would be independent scientists who have nothing in mind except the safety of our children. But that's not true. What the Inspector General's report (and I urge those of you in the press to go look it up, it's the 2008 Inspector General of HHS) said is that virtually all of the members of those committees have financial entanglements with the vaccine companies. I'll give you an example. Dr. Paul Offit, whom many of you know is a vaccine industry tycoon and insider, the principal promoter of vaccines in this country for the vaccine industry, who is on the vaccine industry payroll, in 1999 sat on the committee that approved [and added] the rotavirus vaccine to the schedule. At the time, he was working on his own rotavirus vaccine. Opening that gateway by adding that vaccine to the schedule made his patent extremely valuable. And six years later he sold that patent for \$182 million and pocketed about \$40 million himself.

That kind of financial entanglement by the people who are deciding what vaccines to add to the schedule



## A RESPONSE TO FRANK BRUNI

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**F**ranks Bruni's angry tirade against me in his Sunday *New York Times* column took me by surprise. Last February, we'd had a brief, friendly, and mutually respectful telephone conversation. He had written an article about vaccine safety at the end of January and I asked if he would allow me to show him some of the recent scientific studies linking thimerosal to a range of brain injuries. I also wanted to show him the transcripts of statements by CDC whistleblower Dr. William Thompson, discussing the troubling disarray and deception within the CDC's vaccine program. Bruni told me he would be delighted to look at the materials. He said he was under deadline at the moment, but he cordially invited me to call back to schedule lunch. Both of us are busy and so I was not surprised that he did not return my follow-up call the next week. Bruni now reveals that he was deliberately dodging my phone call because he was frightened that I would use the lunch meeting to "scaremonger" him.

It's disappointing that a columnist for America's leading publication can be "scaremongered" by facts. The sad outcome is that instead of the enlightened, civil debate that our country deserves, Bruni delivers in this past Sunday's column the same tired species of invective and ad hominem attack that have long characterized this controversy.

In the two instances that he ventures from insult into substance, Bruni gets it wrong. Bruni erroneously suggests that mercury has been removed from all pediatric vaccines. In fact there are massive doses of mercury in some meningitis vaccines—now mandated for all schoolchildren in New York—and in vaccines given to pregnant women, infants, and annually to public school kids. Mercury remains in mandated

makes it difficult for all of us to believe that the only thing that they are thinking of is our children's health. And what the Inspector General report said is that 97 percent of the people who sit on those panels have the same kind of financial entanglements and conflicts-of-interest as did Paul Offit. So there are now 16 vaccines—69 shots [or] inoculations that our children get. There are 271 new vaccines in the bureaucratic pipeline at the CDC awaiting approval, which in all likelihood will ultimately be added to the schedule. And Paul Offit says that he believes that it's blue sky for Wall Street after that, because he thinks, [and] he has said publicly, that children can take as many as 10,000 vaccines.

When you go to these vaccine committee hearings, it's not a bunch of scientists in white lab coats. It's a bunch of Wall Street analysts in suits. And as soon as that decision is made, they run out of the room and get on their cell phones and you can watch that stock price spike. So these are financial decisions that are being driven by a trillion-dollar industry and we need to restore the integrity of that agency.

Now the other part of the vaccine division is the immunology safety division, which are the scientists who are charged with making sure that our vaccines are safe and efficacious. But what we now know, from looking at the science and the phony epidemiological studies that they produce, is that this division is extremely corrupt. A senior scientist at the CDC, a 17-year veteran, Dr. William Thompson, who is the lead author on the most important of those studies, has now invoked, as of August, federal whistleblower protection, and has hired

Morgan Verkamp, one of the leading whistleblower attorneys in our country. [He] has said publicly that the CDC scientists in that division have been required by their bosses for at least a decade to lie, to manipulate, to massage data, and to bury data that connect neurological disorders including autism to thimerosal exposure and to vaccines.

And he has turned over tens of thousands of pages of documents to Congress and he wants to be subpoenaed and to testify so that the American press will finally have to begin covering something that we have known about for a decade.

So here is the problem: All of the checks and balances in our society that normally would protect children from a rapacious industry have been neutralized.

As we've said, the pharmaceutical industry is one of the biggest industries in the world. It's a trillion-dollar industry. It is the number-one lobbyist in Washington, D.C., and the state capitols. It gives \$2.6 billion—twice what oil and gas gives to our political leaders. The pharmaceutical industry gives four times to our politicians what defense and aeronautic contractors do. This is an industry that has complete possession of our politicians at Capitol Hill. The politicians are no longer protecting the public. The regulatory agency has become captured by the industry it's supposed to regulate. The CDC is now a sock puppet for the pharmaceutical industry and is representing the mercantile interests of that industry. Promoting them, rather than our public health, is their primary priority.

The lawyers and the courts that would also form a

### **A RESPONSE TO FRANK BRUNI (CONTINUED)**

pediatric HepB, Hib and DTap vaccines at double the concentrations deemed safe by the EPA. To the ingredients of those vaccines, pharmaceutical companies have recently added aluminum adjuvants that act synergistically to dramatically amplify the neurotoxicity of the remaining mercury. Finally, pharmaceutical companies have merely reduced mercury levels in pediatric vaccines given to American children. We continue to send the range of pediatric vaccines fully loaded with mercury to children in developing nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, a practice that will haunt our country in many dreadful ways.

In defending thimerosal safety, Bruni alludes to the debunked industry canard that the ethylmercury in vaccines is less persistent in the body and therefore less toxic than the heavily regulated methylmercury in fish. However, the best and most recent science shows that ethylmercury is twice as persistent in the brain (Burbacher et al, 2005), and 50 times as toxic as methylmercury in fish (Guzzi et al, 2012).

Bruni acknowledges that he relies on the CDC's version of what the science says rather than reading the science himself. There is a peril in unctuous faith in government orthodoxies. Four scathing federal studies by Congress, the U.S. Senate, the HHS Inspector General, and the HHS Office of Research Integrity paint the CDC's vaccine division as a cesspool of corruption due to scandalous conflicts with the \$30 billion vaccine industry. In August, the CDC's senior vaccine scientist, Dr. William Thompson, invoked federal whistleblower protection, confessing that CDC supervisors systematically require vaccine division scientists to bury data linking vaccines to autism and other neurologic harms.

AMERICAN JOURNALISTS NEED TO START READING THE SCIENCE THEMSELVES AND STOP LETTING COMPROMISED GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRATS TELL THEM WHAT THE SCIENCE SUPPOSEDLY SAYS.

barrier—a check and balance against the power of this very wealthy industry—are also gone because the pharmaceutical industry has used its political clout on Capitol Hill to get laws passed to make it illegal for people who've been injured by vaccines to sue the company that injured them. So there's no discovery, there are no depositions, there are no document searches. You can go to the vaccine court, which is essentially a secret court that doesn't advertise. Even the vaccine court estimates that fewer than 10 percent of the people who are injured by vaccines and who could make claims ever show up there. And when you get there you're not suing the industry that poisoned you: You're suing the federal government. Nevertheless they paid out \$3 billion to thousands and thousands of people who've been injured by the vaccines.

So you have the politicians that have been neutralized, you have the regulatory agency neutralized. You have the courts and lawyers gone. What's left? The press. Well, the pharmaceutical industry is the single biggest



In our book *Thimerosal: Let the Science Speak*, a review of the published science, Dr. Martha Herbert, Dr. Mark Hyman and I identified hundreds of peer-reviewed studies by leading government and university scientists showing that thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative, is a devastating neurologic toxin linked to neurological disorders now epidemic in American children, including ADD, ADHD, low IQ, speech development delays, and tics. I have attached a digest of these studies as an addendum to this article on my website. We found no published study proving thimerosal safe.

Bruni is left making the strange and anemic argument that if pharmaceutical companies were truly driven by greed, as purportedly cynical thimerosal opponents believe, Pharma's best business strategy would be to stop manufacturing vaccines, let contagions run rampant, and then profiteer on medicine sales. I'm not jumping into that shark tank with Bruni, but I will dip in one toe by pointing out that Pharma is making plenty of dough selling Adderall, Prozac, and dozens of other best-selling drugs to treat the neurological injuries that now affect one in six American children. All these illnesses are consistent with symptoms documented in mass mercury poisonings around the globe.

Frank Bruni and other American journalists need to start reading the science themselves and stop letting compromised government bureaucrats tell them what the science supposedly says.

The media's undue reverence for the CDC has emboldened bad agency behavior that jeopardizes vaccine safety. The best way to promote vaccine participation and compliance is through intense media scrutiny that will restore integrity and credibility at the CDC. — Robert F. Kennedy Jr.



advertiser on television, radio and newspapers. They give between \$3.4 and \$5.6 billion a year in advertising. So you will not see a network news show covering this issue honestly, ever. And you guys all know that. There's this kind of Kafkaesque censorship in the news about having a reasonable debate about this issue—a fact-based debate. So instead we hear a lot of name calling because they can't debate us on the merits. They call us anti-vaccine. They call us hysterical. They call us conspiracy theorists. I want people who use the term "anti-vax parents" to be thinking of a parent with a disabled child, because that's who they are.

I want to say one other thing. This movement that calls you anti-vax is the most misogynistic movement that I have seen in my lifetime. It is a movement that is anti-mother and it is anti-woman. The names that I hear coming out of people's mouths about hysterics, and "refrigerator moms," and all of this in our major newspapers like *The New York Times*, is extraordinary. And I want to say something about these women before I stand down. I was raised around extraordinary women. My grandmother, Rose Kennedy, was mother of three senators, and the mother of a President. My aunt Eunice

Shriver started the Special Olympics. But I have never met women like the ones that I have met in this movement. They are articulate. They're eloquent. They're pharmacists. They're doctors. They're lawyers. They have read the science. They know what the science says. And they can destroy any of these politicians if they were given the ability to debate.

The CDC is up there saying, "Oh, well, we don't know if this is an epidemic." They will not call it an epidemic. They will not call it a crisis. They call it a "health concern," and they say, "Well, maybe we're just noticing kids who are this sick for the first time, but they've been around this whole time." And I would ask you, where is this population of adults that's wearing football helmets and diapers and that is not verbal. They don't exist. They don't exist in the 30-year-old cohort. They only exist in our children. They're in school now and they're costing this country \$400 billion a year and they're about to hit our social safety nets and they're going to collapse it. And it's going to become a concern for all Americans now.

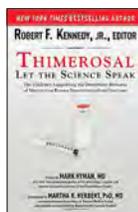
These women and these parents are traumatized by what happened to their children. They're people who are



I HAVE NEVER MET WOMEN LIKE THE ONES THAT I HAVE MET IN THIS MOVEMENT. THEY ARE ARTICULATE. THEY'RE ELOQUENT. THEY'RE PHARMACISTS. THEY'RE DOCTORS. THEY'RE LAWYERS. THEY HAVE READ THE SCIENCE. AND THEY CAN DESTROY ANY OF THESE POLITICIANS IF THEY WERE GIVEN THE ABILITY TO DEBATE.

bankrupted. They have a 75 percent divorce rate. They can't go out at night. They can't leave their child with a babysitter. They are tied at home. And they don't have time for politics. They have been politically invisible until this moment. They're traumatized by what happened to their child, they're traumatized by the doctors and the public health organizations and press that told them what they say isn't true—what they know to be true is not true. But now they're coming out because they see another threat that they are going to be triply traumatized. They're being told that no matter what happens, no matter what they know about their child's health, that all of the barriers between that pharmaceutical company and them are now being taken away and now they're going to remove the mother from the equation as well.

So that's what this is about—all of the barriers that are meant to protect our children: the government, the lawyers, the regulatory agency, and the press. The checks and balances in our democratic system that are supposed to stand between corporate power and our little children have been removed. There's only one barrier left, and that's the parents. We need to keep that in the equation. Thank you. 📌



Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s reputation as a resolute defender of the environment stems from a litany of successful legal actions. Mr. Kennedy was named one of Time magazine's "Heroes for the Planet" for his success helping Riverkeeper lead the fight to restore the Hudson River. The group's achievement helped spawn more than 200 Waterkeeper organizations across the globe. Mr. Kennedy serves as senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper and president of Waterkeeper Alliance. He has worked on environmental issues across the Americas and has assisted several indigenous tribes in Latin America and Canada in successfully negotiating

treaties protecting traditional homelands. Among Mr. Kennedy's published books are *Thimerosal: Let the Science Speak* and the New York Times bestseller *Crimes Against Nature*. His articles have appeared in The New York Times, the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Rolling Stone, the Village Voice, and many other publications. Mr. Kennedy is a graduate of Harvard University. He studied at the London School of Economics and received his law degree from the University of Virginia Law School. Following graduation he attended Pace University School of Law, where he was awarded a master's degree in environmental law. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).

# VACCINES AND TUSKEGEE

BY ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.

Last August, CDC senior scientist Dr. William Thompson invoked federal whistleblower status and confessed that the CDC has known since 2001 that black boys exposed to the MMR vaccine have a disproportionate risk of autism.

Thompson, a 17-year CDC veteran, is the author of some of the leading studies cited by the CDC to exculpate vaccines from the autism epidemic. Thompson, who still works at the CDC, released the raw data sets that he says his bosses at the CDC ordered him to conceal. Those data show that black boys who received the MMR vaccine prior to three years old, as the CDC recommends, were 3.36 times more likely to receive an autism diagnosis than those who received the vaccine after 3 years of age. This effect was not observed in other race categories. Nevertheless, when the CDC scientists published their results in *Pediatrics* in 2004, they omitted the damaging data, fraudulently declaring there was no risk of autism from the MMR vaccination. In August 2014,



Dr. Thompson issued a press release through his attorney stating, "I regret that my coauthors and I omitted statistically significant information in our 2004 article published in the journal *Pediatrics*. The omitted data suggested that African-American males who received the MMR vaccine before age 36 months were at increased risk for autism."

The buried data were disturbing, but hardly surprising. The most reliable studies in the scientific literature indicate that African-Americans are more susceptible to vaccine injury and may also have increased susceptibility to neurological disorders such as autism.

A 2010 nationwide study of the CDC's Autism and Developmental Disability Monitoring Network found autism incidence about 25 percent higher in African-Americans than Caucasians. A 2014 study published in *Pediatrics* showed higher rates of all categories of autism among African-Americans in Los Angeles County compared to Caucasians, with the incidence of severe autism elevated by 263 percent among foreign-born blacks and 152 percent for U.S.-born blacks as compared to U.S.-born whites.

A 2010 study in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health* showed that blacks were at significantly greater risk of regressing into autism after receiving the thimerosal-containing Hepatitis B vaccination series as infants. When analyzed further, the data showed that black boys receiving the HepB series were 53 percent more likely to have autism than those black boys not receiving any HepB shot.

Based upon all the population data and the CDC's most recent autism incidence estimates, at least 100,000 African-American male children could have been spared debilitating neurological injury if the CDC scientists had told the truth when the increased risk was first known to them in 2001. Dr. Thompson has requested to testify before Congress about corruption at the CDC and has handed Congress thousands of pages of documents showing widespread fraud in the CDC's vaccine division.

It's not the first time the CDC has concealed vaccine risks from African-Americans. Less than 10 years ago, in June 1996, African-Americans in Los Angeles learned that the CDC has been conducting vaccine experiments in their communities. Beginning in 1989, the CDC conducted an experiment on nearly 1,500 black and Hispanic infants using an unlicensed measles vaccine without disclosing to parents that the drug was a high-potency experimental vaccine designed to overwhelm the baby's maternal immune system. The CDC only halted its secret experiment in 1991 when companion clinical trials conducted in Africa and Haiti showed increased death rate and severe immune system disorder among female infants who received the vaccine. Those children died within two years after the vaccination.

"A mistake was made. It shocked me," then-CDC Director Dr. David Satcher told the *LA Times*. "We need to move to a



**IN 1972, PETER BUXTON REVEALED THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS 40 YEARS BOTH THE CDC AND THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE CONDUCTED THE SO-CALLED “TUSKEGEE EXPERIMENT” TO STUDY THE PROGRESSION OF UNTREATED SYPHILIS IN IMPOVERISHED AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN IN RURAL ALABAMA.**

new level of assurance so people can trust what we’re doing.” The CDC denies that any Los Angeles black children were injured by the unlicensed vaccine, but has not produced any studies to confirm that claim.

In 1972, a government whistleblower, Peter Buxton, revealed that for the previous 40 years, beginning in 1932, both the CDC and the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) conducted the so-called “Tuskegee Experiment” to study the progression of untreated syphilis in impoverished African-American men in rural Alabama. Public-health regulators lured illiterate sharecroppers with the promise of hot meals, funeral costs and free healthcare from the U.S. government. According to the Centers for Disease Control, which took over the study in the early 1960s, none of the 299 syphilitic sharecroppers were ever told they had the disease. The CDC purposefully withheld penicillin after the antibiotic became a proven treatment in 1947. It actively prevented participants from accessing syphilis treatment programs

elsewhere. The CDC’s victims in that study included numerous men who died of syphilis, 40 wives who contracted the disease, and 19 children born with congenital syphilis.

When, in 1966, Buxton, an African-American, sent a letter to government regulators complaining about the ethics and morality of the study, the CDC reaffirmed the need to continue the research until all subjects had died and been autopsied. To bolster its position, the CDC sought and gained support for the study’s extension from the American Medical Association (AMA).

Buxton finally told his story to my uncle, Senator Edward Kennedy, in July of 1972. Senator Kennedy convened Senate hearings, at which Buxton and HEW officials testified and the CDC finally terminated the study. 📌

*Read more at [eurweb.com/2015/06/the-cdcs-latest-tuskegee-experiment-prompts-open-letter-from-bobby-kennedy-jr/#pvGxvrEmAE7ujmov.99](http://eurweb.com/2015/06/the-cdcs-latest-tuskegee-experiment-prompts-open-letter-from-bobby-kennedy-jr/#pvGxvrEmAE7ujmov.99)*



# Astroturf

By Sharyl Attkisson

# W

hat's most successful when it appears to be something it's not? Astroturf. As in fake grassroots.

The many ways that corporations, special interests and political interests of all stripes exploit media and the Internet to perpetuate astroturf is ever-expanding. Surreptitious astroturf methods are now more important to these interests than traditional lobbying of Congress. There's an entire PR industry built around it in Washington.

Astroturfers often disguise themselves and publish blogs, write letters to the editor, produce ads, start nonprofits, establish Facebook and Twitter accounts, edit Wikipedia pages or simply post comments online to try to fool you into thinking an independent or grassroots movement is speaking. They use their partners in blogs and in the news media in an attempt to lend an air of legitimacy or impartiality to their efforts.

Astroturf's biggest accomplishment is when it crosses over into semi-trusted news organizations that unquestioningly cite or copy it.

The whole point of astroturf is to try to convince you there's widespread support for or against an agenda when there's not.

The language of astroturfers and propagandists includes trademark inflammatory terms such as: *anti*, *nutty*, *quack*, *crank*, *pseudo-science*, *debunking*, *conspiracy theory*, *denier* and *junk science*. Sometimes astroturfers claim to "debunk myths" that aren't myths at all. They declare debates over that aren't over. They claim that "everybody agrees" when everyone doesn't agree. They aim to make you think you're an outlier when you're not.

Astroturfers and propagandists tend to attack and controversialize the news organizations, personalities and people surrounding an issue rather than sticking to the facts. They try to censor and silence topics and speakers rather than engage them. And most of all,

they reserve all of their expressed skepticism for those who expose wrongdoing rather than the wrongdoers. In other words, instead of questioning authority, they question those who question authority.

There is an array of blogs that use words such as "science" and "skeptic" in their titles or propaganda in an attempt to portray an image of neutrality and logic when they are often fighting established science and serving pro-pharmaceutical industry agendas. These include: ScienceBlogs.com (its author using the pseudonym "Orac"); vaccine inventor Dr. Paul Offit of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who earned

an undisclosed fortune from Merck pharmaceuticals; and his apparent replacement in trolling blogs, Dorit Rubenstein Reiss. She is a law professor at the University of California, Hastings, and a frequent contributor to SkepticalRaptors.com.

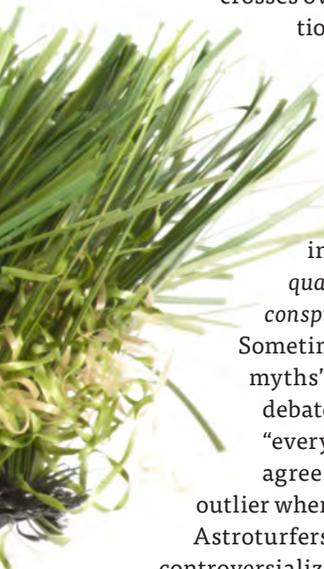
A final category frequently mentioned are the quasi-news organizations that sometimes throw readers off the astroturf trail because they publish some legitimate news-type or pop-culture stories, but mix in propaganda or astroturf. These sources tend to be highly cited by the unquestioning traditional news media, either to advance an agenda, or in the media's attempt to be hip and edgy or "get clicks."

Sometimes, astroturf is in the eye of the beholder. But no matter how you see it, there is no short supply. 🗨

## THEY RESERVE ALL OF THEIR SKEPTICISM FOR THOSE WHO EXPOSE WRONGDOING RATHER THAN THE WRONGDOERS. INSTEAD OF QUESTIONING AUTHORITY, THEY QUESTION THOSE WHO QUESTION AUTHORITY.



Sharyl Attkisson is an investigative journalist and author of the New York Times bestseller *Stonewalled*. Attkisson will be hosting a new, national Sunday program this fall focusing on investigative and accountability reporting. She is the recipient of five Emmy Awards and the Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative reporting, including for such topics as the Bush administration's involvement in the TARP bank bailout and the Obama administration's Fast and Furious ATF scandal. She recently testified separately to the House and Senate about government secrecy and intrusion. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).





# ANTI-SCIENCE?

“You Keep Using That Word.  
I Do Not Think It Means  
What You Think It Means.”

By Zoey O’Toole

**I**t has become fashionable in the media to lament a modern lack of “faith” in science. *National Geographic’s* March 2015 cover story written by Joel Achenbach, “Why Do Many Reasonable People Doubt Science?”, exemplifies this trend with the caption “We live in an age when all manner of scientific knowledge—from climate change to vaccinations—faces furious opposition. Some even have doubts about the moon landing.” As the holder of a bachelor’s degree in physics who happens to be quite proud of my father’s contribution to the moon landings, yet has the temerity to question the wisdom of widespread vaccines and GMOs, I decided it was time to debunk the idea that questioning vaccines is “anti-science.”

Despite his title, Achenbach makes the case that those who “doubt science” are not in fact “reasonable.” Rather, they are driven by emotion—what he calls intuitions or “naïve beliefs.” “We have trouble digesting randomness,” he says. “Our brains crave pattern and meaning,” implying that we use our own experiences to see patterns where none exist. Achenbach uses logical inconsistencies and false assumptions that, taken together, make a better case *against* his thesis than for it—at least with regard to vaccine science.

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, philosopher Thomas Kuhn instigated a revolution of his own—in our understanding of how science progresses. Kuhn’s main idea is that scientific understanding is not simply a gradual accretion of knowledge, but is instead more episodic in nature with periods of “normal science,” “puzzle-solving” guided by the prevailing paradigm, punctuated by periods of “revolutionary science” as an old paradigm gives way to one that better explains the totality of observed phenomena. An established paradigm is generally not abandoned until overwhelming evidence accumulates that an alternate credible hypothesis does a better job of explaining the data.

As a science journalist for *National Geographic*, Achenbach ought to know Kuhn’s work, and indeed he seems to understand it when he says “Scientific results are always provisional, susceptible to being overturned by some future experiment or observation.” Having sat through many lectures on scientific theories once accepted and later discarded when they did not fully account for the data, I fully concur. Oddly, Achenbach undercuts that understanding with, “The media would also have you believe that science is full of shocking discoveries made by lone geniuses. Not so. The (boring)

## WHAT DETERMINES WHO WILL BE AMONG THE BOLD SCIENTISTS WHO USHER IN A PARADIGM SHIFT AND THOSE WHO OPPOSE IT?

truth is that it usually advances incrementally, through the steady accretion of data and insights gathered by many people over many years.”

This statement is patently false. First off, the media tends to downplay, if not ignore, “lone geniuses” until their contributions are thoroughly accepted by the mainstream. Secondly, “the steady accretion of data and insights gathered by many people over many years” cannot by its nature bring about the biggest advancements in science—the scientific revolutions. As Wikipedia puts it,

*In any community of scientists, Kuhn states, there are some individuals who are bolder than most. These scientists, judging that a crisis exists, embark on what Thomas Kuhn calls revolutionary science.... Those scientists who possess an exceptional ability to recognize a theory's potential will be the first whose preference is likely to shift in favour of the challenging paradigm.*

Eventually a “paradigm shift” occurs that ushers in a scientific revolution, resulting in an explosion of new ideas and directions for research. Achenbach recognizes this tension between the bolder and more conservative scientists to a degree:

*Even for scientists, the scientific method is a hard discipline. Like the rest of us, they're vulnerable to what they call confirmation bias—the tendency to look for and see only evidence that confirms what they already believe. But unlike the rest of us, they submit their ideas to formal peer review before publishing them.*

While Achenbach acknowledges that, as human beings, scientists are subject to biases, he implies that those biases are held in check by the magical process of peer review. What he fails to mention, however, is the fact that peer review is so imperfect in practice that Richard Smith, former editor of the *British Medical Journal*, wrote in his 2006 article, “Peer Review: A Flawed Process at the Heart of Science and Journals”:

*This pastiche—which is not far from systems I have seen used—is little better than tossing a coin, because the level of agreement between*

*reviewers on whether a paper should be published is little better than you'd expect by chance.*

*That is why Robbie Fox, the great 20th century editor of the Lancet, who was no admirer of peer review, wondered whether anybody would notice if he were to swap the piles marked “publish” and “reject.” He also joked that the Lancet had a system of throwing a pile of papers down the stairs and publishing those that reached the bottom. When I was editor of the BMJ I was challenged by two of the cleverest researchers in Britain to publish an issue of the journal composed only of papers that had failed peer review and see if anybody noticed. I wrote back “How do you know I haven't already done it?”*

Marcia Angell, M.D., former editor in chief of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, believes that problems with scientific research, especially pharmaceutical research, go much deeper than peer review. In May 2000 she wrote an editorial in the *NEJM* asking “Is Academic Medicine for Sale?” about the increasingly blurry lines between academic research and the pharmaceutical companies that fund it. The editorial was prompted by a research article written by authors whose conflicts-of-interest disclosures were longer than the article itself. [Read more about her on page 29 of this issue.]

What determines who will be among the bold scientists who usher in a paradigm shift and those who oppose it? Those who can take a step back from the narrow focus of “normal science” to see the bigger picture will be those who possess the “exceptional ability to recognize a theory's potential.” Pediatric neurologist and Harvard researcher Martha Herbert, M.D., Ph.D., describes this tension well:

*Ironically the exquisite precision of our science may itself promote error generation. This is because precision is usually achieved by ignoring context and all the variation outside of our narrow focus, even though biological systems in particular are intrinsically variable and complex rather than uniform and simple. In fact our brains utilize this subtlety and context to make important distinctions, but our scientific methods mostly do not. The problems that come back to bite us then come from details we didn't consider.*

The ability, as Herbert describes it, to use “subtlety and context to make important distinctions” constitutes the difference between the scientific revolutionaries and those who defend an error long past the point it has been proven to be an error. It is an ability that Albert Einstein possessed to a larger degree than most. Einstein felt that “All great achievements of science must start from intuitive knowledge,” and claimed, “At times I feel certain I am right while not knowing the reason.” Gavin de Becker, private security expert and author of *The Gift of Fear*, considers intuition a valid form of knowledge that does not involve the conscious mind. Rather than denigrating intuition as an irrational response based on “naïve beliefs,” he teaches people to recognize, honor and rely upon their intuition in order to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

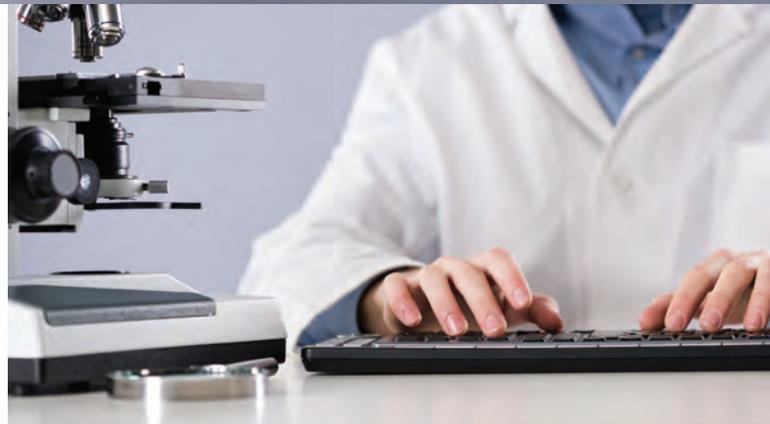
Achenbach, on the other hand, claims that our intuition will lead us astray as it may prompt us to take actions that we would not regard as “rational.” With regard to an apparent cluster of cancers near a hazardous waste dump, he says:

*To be confident there’s a causal connection between the [hazardous waste] dump and the [local cluster of] cancers, you need statistical analysis showing that there are many more cancers than would be expected randomly, evidence that the victims were exposed to chemicals from the dump, and evidence that the chemicals really can cause cancer.*

That’s true, of course, but surely it’s not all that one would—or should—take into account when deciding whether or not to build one’s house next to the hazardous waste dump. Denying your intuitive urge to avoid the hazardous waste dump with the rational thought “science hasn’t proven it’s a problem yet” could turn out to be the worst decision you ever make.

Achenbach’s thesis ultimately fails due to his reliance on Yale University law professor Dan Kahan’s theory that people fall into two camps, those who have an “egalitarian” mindset and those who have a “hierarchical” and “individualistic” mindset. Kahan thinks that people who “doubt science” will believe whatever their tribe says “we believe,” because to do otherwise will get them thrown out of the tribe. This is crystallized by Marcia McNutt, editor of *Science* magazine: “We’ve never left high school. People still have a need to fit in, and that need to fit in is so strong that local values and local opinions are always trumping science.”

The problem with this viewpoint is that it is inherently contradictory. On the one hand, Achenbach pretends that only science that fits the prevailing viewpoint is worthy of note, when that is clearly not the case. For



**GAVIN DE BECKER, AUTHOR OF *THE GIFT OF FEAR*, TEACHES PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE, HONOR AND RELY UPON THEIR INTUITION IN ORDER TO KEEP THEMSELVES AND THEIR LOVED ONES SAFE.**

instance, he pretends that there is no other science than the infamous 1998 case study of 12 children written by Andrew Wakefield that supports a link between vaccines and autism, when there are in fact a large number of studies that do so.

Then Achenbach argues that we should ignore climate science that doesn’t fit the prevailing paradigm because, “It’s very clear, however, that organizations funded in part by the fossil fuel industry have deliberately tried to undermine the public’s understanding of the scientific consensus by promoting a few skeptics.” I tend to agree with Achenbach on this point. While I have a healthy distrust of scientific “consensus,” that is coupled with an even stronger skepticism of science conducted by an industry that stands to gain from the outcome of that science. Illogically, however, Achenbach doesn’t display the same skepticism toward science financed by an industry that *controls* the prevailing paradigm. Vaccines are one of the fastest-rising sectors in what Marcia Angell calls the most profitable industry for more than two decades, and the vast majority of vaccine science is conducted by manufacturers themselves or the CDC, which Robert F. Kennedy Jr. describes as a “cesspool of corruption” due to myriad conflicts of interest. [His overview is on page 8 of this issue.] Julie Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H., who left the CDC to run the vaccine division at Merck after overseeing research that “exonerates” vaccines in rising autism rates, was not an anomaly. And the situation is eerily similar when it comes to GMO safety studies conducted by Monsanto and rubber-stamped by the FDA.

The most ironic part of Achenbach's piece is that, in practically the same breath he tells us to ignore science outside the consensus, he lauds scientists who are so dedicated to truth that they break with their "tribe" to report what they have observed, despite censure, loss of prestige, or even career. In other words, the very scientists operating outside the consensus! Few scientists have sacrificed more by speaking the truth than Andrew Wakefield. Prior to the publication of his case study, Wakefield was a well-respected gastroenterologist with a prestigious position at the Royal Free Hospital in London—a deeply entrenched member of the "tribe" who, as a result of standing behind his work, has since had his medical license revoked and almost never sees his name in print without the word "discredited" next to it. Yet Wakefield *still* performs work that undercuts the prevailing paradigm. By Achenbach's own argument, Andrew Wakefield is inherently more credible than all the scientists clinging to the "vaccines are [all] safe and effective" consensus position.

Fear of betraying the tribe can never explain those who question vaccine safety. Time and time again I have heard of people losing friends, loved ones, and even jobs when they do so. It can be such a lonely position to take that many express profound relief when they find like-minded people online. In effect, having given up their place in the tribe, they must seek a new tribe. Evangelical Christians, the very people considered most likely to be "hierarchical individualists" may have the loneliest road of all, as many of their organizations have come out strongly in support of the current vaccine program.

Doctors who express concerns are vilified by the media and a vitriolic group of self-identified "science" bloggers, despite the fact that many of them start out as vocal believers in the basic premise of vaccines. Surprisingly, there are still quite a few who have the courage to buck the tribe, including Bernadine Healy, M.D., former head of the National Institutes of Health (a de-facto "tribal chief") who, in a 2008 interview with CBS correspondent Sharyl Attkisson, disclosed that "when she began researching autism and vaccines she found credible published, peer-reviewed scientific studies that support the idea of an association. That seemed to counter what many of her colleagues had been saying for years. She dug a little deeper and was surprised to find that the government has not embarked upon some of the most basic research that could help answer the question of a link."

The biggest problem with Achenbach's piece, and every other piece that laments the "rejection of science," is that it confuses rejection of technology with rejection of science. As Alice Dreger, professor at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, illustrates in

her article in PATHWAYS issue 35 ("The Hard Science Supporting Low-Tech Birth") technology does not equal science. "In fact," says Dreger, "if you look at scientific studies of birth, you find over and over again that many technological interventions increase risk to the mother and child rather than decreasing it." She says that the technological aspects of medicine market well to our technology-obsessed and death-denying culture, while "a low-interventionist approach to medical care—no matter how scientific—does not."

The "Precautionary Principle" asserts that, when in doubt, it is better to err on the side of caution. Intuitively and logically this should be obvious. Science can take a long time to prove something is harmful—so long, in fact, that many drugs have done tremendous damage before they were withdrawn: Thalidomide, Vioxx, DES and Darvon, to name a few. The Precautionary Principle isn't anti-science. It even supports one of Achenbach's goals—making efforts to avoid disastrous climate change. It would also support making sure GMOs can't do systemic damage *before* licensing them, testing vaccines against true placebos and in the recommended combinations *before* giving them to every newborn in the country, and comparing health outcomes of vaccinated vs. unvaccinated people *after* licensing them. Hold on...this can't be right. I'm *recommending* science!

When it comes down to it, science is a tool. And like any tool, it can be used ethically or unethically in pursuit of ends that range from sublime to unquestionably evil. Is it anti-science to deplore Mengele's experiments on concentration camp captives? Or the ethics of the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male"? Was Hans Albrecht Bethe, a director of Los Alamos during the Manhattan Project, anti-science when he called upon other scientists to refuse to make atomic weapons? As a tool, science can serve corporate interests or it can serve humanity's interests. When those interests are in opposition, it is not "anti-science" to insist that science serve humanity over corporations. 📍



Zoey O'Toole is editor in chief of the blog at [thinkingmomsrevolution.com](http://thinkingmomsrevolution.com). She and 23 of her friends formed the Thinking Moms' Revolution because they saw so many children struggling and wanted to bring the tremendous power of parents sharing knowledge and fellowship to a wider community. This article is a shortened version of a story previously published at [thinkingmomsrevolution.com](http://thinkingmomsrevolution.com) and is available at [tinyurl.com/nwomgl4](http://tinyurl.com/nwomgl4). View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).

# What the News ISN'T SAYING About Vaccine-Autism Studies

By Sharyl Attkisson

When a new study finds no link between vaccines and autism, it instantly makes headlines on TV news and popular media everywhere. It is billed as the final word, “once again” disproving the notion that vaccines could have anything to do with autism. What you don’t learn on the news is the self-interest and financial ties behind the studies. In one recent case, the consulting firm behind the study listed a major vaccine maker among its clients: The Lewin Group.

That potential conflict of interest was not disclosed in the paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*; the study authors simply declare “The Lewin Group operates with editorial independence.”

(As an aside, according to OpenSecrets.org, The Lewin Group’s parent company, UnitedHealth Group, is a key government partner in Obamacare. Its subsidiary QSSI was given the contract to build the federal government’s HealthCare.gov website. One of its top executives and his family are top Obama donors.)

Conflicts of interest alone do not invalidate a study. But they serve as important context in the relentless

effort by pharmaceutical interests and their government partners to discredit the many scientists and studies that have found possible vaccine-autism links.

## Many Studies Suggest Links

When the popular press, bloggers and medical pundits uncritically promote a study like The Lewin Group’s, it must confound researchers like Lucija Tomljenovic, Catherine DeSoto, Robert Hitlan, Christopher Shaw, Helen Ratajczak, Boyd Haley, Carolyn Gallagher, Melody Goodman, M.I. Kawashti, O.R. Amin, N.G. Rowehey, T. Minami, Laura Hewitson, Brian Lopresti, Carol Stott, Scott Mason, Jaime Tomko, Bernard Rimland, Woody McGinnis, K. Shandley and D.W. Austin.

They are just a few of the many scientists whose peer-reviewed, published works have found possible links between vaccines and autism. But unlike The Lewin Group’s study, their research has not been endorsed and promoted by the government and, therefore, has not been widely reported in the media. In fact, news reports, blogs and “medical experts” routinely claim no such studies exist.



THIS CIRCLE OPERATES WITH THE MORAL SUPPORT OF THE VACCINE INDUSTRY AND ITS GOVERNMENT PARTNERS, CITING ONE ANOTHER'S FLAWED CRITIQUES AS SUPPOSED PROOF THAT EACH STUDY HAS BEEN "DEBUNKED," ALTHOUGH THE STUDIES CONTINUE TO APPEAR IN PEER-REVIEWED, PUBLISHED JOURNALS AND IN THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH LIBRARY.

To be clear: No study to date conclusively proves or disproves a causal link between vaccines and autism and—despite the misreporting—none has claimed to do so. Each typically finds either (a) no association, or (b) a possible association on a narrow vaccine-autism question. Taken as a whole, the research on both sides serves as a body of evidence.

### **The Astroturf Propaganda Campaign**

It's theoretically possible that all of the studies supporting a possible link between vaccines and autism are wrong. And, if the propagandists are to be believed, each of the researchers is an incompetent crank, quack, nut or fraud (and, of course, "anti-vaccine" for daring to dabble in research that attempts to solve the autism puzzle and leads to vaccine safety issues). The scientists and their research are "controversial," simply because the propagandists declare them to be.

The disparaged scientists include well-published neurologists, pharmacists, epidemiologists, immunologists, Ph.D.s, chemists and microbiologists from places like Boston Children's Hospital, Horizon Molecular

Medicine at Georgia State University, University of British Columbia, City College of New York, Columbia University, Stony Brook University Medical Center, University of Northern Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute, Al Azhar University of Cairo, Kinki University in Japan, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Swinburne University of Technology in Australia, Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Poland, Department of Child Health Care, Children's Hospital of Fudan University in China, Utah State University and many more.

Their work is, at best, ignored by the media; at worst, it's viciously attacked by the predictable flock of self-appointed expert "science" bloggers who often title their blogs with the word "science" or "skeptics" to confer an air of legitimacy.

This astroturf movement, in my opinion, includes but is not limited to: Left Brain Right Brain, Science Blogs, Neuro Skeptic, Science Based Medicine, Liz Ditz, Crooks and Liars, Respectful Insolence, Health News Review, Skeptical Raptor, Skeptic blog, Skeptics.com, *Wired*,

Brian Deer, Seth Mnookin, Orac, Every Child by Two, the vaccine industry-supported American Academy of Pediatrics, and the government/corporate-funded American Council on Science and Health.

This circle operates with the moral support of the vaccine industry and its government partners, citing one another's flawed critiques as supposed proof that each study has been "debunked," although the studies continue to appear in peer-reviewed, published journals and in the government's own National Institutes of Health library.

"Weak," "too small," "haphazard," "not replicated," "junk science," "flawed," "unrelated," declare the propagandists, without exception. Just as attackers spent years challenging any study that linked tobacco to lung cancer.

They know that reporters who don't do their homework will conduct an Internet search, run across the blogs with science-y sounding names, and uncritically accept their word as if it's fact and prevailing thought.

### **A Small Sampling**

Many of the studies have common themes regarding a subset of susceptible children with immunity issues who, when faced with various vaccine challenges, end up with brain damage described as autism.

"Permanent brain damage" is an acknowledged, rare side effect of vaccines; there's no dispute in that arena. The question is whether the specific form of autism brain injury after vaccination is in any way related to vaccination.

So what are a few of these published studies supporting a possible link between vaccines and autism?

As far back as 1998, a serology study by the College of Pharmacy at University of Michigan supported the hypothesis that an autoimmune response from the live



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measles virus in MMR vaccine “may play a causal role in autism.” (Nothing to see here, say the critics, that study is old.)

In 2002, a Utah State University study found that “an inappropriate antibody response to MMR [vaccine], specifically the measles component thereof, might be related to pathogenesis of autism.” (“Flawed and non-replicable,” insist the propagandists.)

Also in 2002, the Autism Research Institute in San Diego looked at a combination of vaccine factors. Scientists found the mercury preservative thimerosal used in some vaccines (such as flu shots) could depress a baby’s immunity. That could make him susceptible to chronic measles infection of the gut when he gets MMR vaccine, which contains live measles virus. (The bloggers say it’s an old study, and that other studies contradict it.)

In 2006, a team of microbiologists in Cairo, Egypt concluded, “deficient immune response to measles, mumps and rubella vaccine antigens might be associated with autism, as a leading cause or a resulting event.”

A 2007 study found statistically significant evidence suggesting that boys who got the triple series Hepatitis B vaccine when it contained thimerosal were “more susceptible to developmental disability” than unvaccinated boys.

Similarly, a 5-year study of 79,000 children by the same institution found boys given Hepatitis B vaccine at birth had a three times increased risk for autism than boys vaccinated later or not at all. Nonwhite boys were at greatest risk. (“Weak study,” say the critics.)

A 2009 study in the *Journal of Child Neurology* found a major flaw in a widely-cited study that claimed no link between thimerosal in vaccines and autism. Their analysis found that “the original *p* value was in error and that a significant relation does exist between the blood levels of mercury and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder.”

The researchers noted, “Like the link between aspirin and heart attack, even a small effect can have major health implications. If there is any link between autism and mercury, it is absolutely crucial that the first reports of the question are not falsely stating that no link occurs.” (Critics: the study is not to be believed.)

A 2010 rat study by the Polish Academy of Sciences suggested “likely involvement” of thimerosal in vaccines (such as flu shots) “in neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism.” (The critics dismiss rat studies.)

In 2010, a pilot study in *Acta Neurobiologiae Experimentalis* found that infant monkeys given the 1990s’ recommended pediatric vaccine regimen showed important brain changes warranting “additional research into the potential impact of an interaction between the MMR and thimerosal-containing vaccines on brain structure and function.”

A study from Japan’s Kinki University in 2010 supported “the possible biological plausibility for how low-dose exposure to mercury from thimerosal-containing vaccines may be associated with autism.”

A 2011 study from Australia’s Swinburne University supported the hypothesis that sensitivity to mercury, such as thimerosal in flu shots, may be a genetic risk factor for autism. (Critics call the study “strange” with “logical hurdles.”)

A *Journal of Immunotoxicology* review in 2011 by a former pharmaceutical company senior scientist concluded autism could result from more than one cause including encephalitis (brain damage) following vaccination. (Critics say she reviewed “debunked and fringe” science.)

In 2011, City University of New York correlated autism prevalence with increased childhood vaccine uptake. “Although mercury has been removed from many vaccines, other culprits may link vaccines to autism,” said the study’s lead author. (To critics, it’s “junk science.”)

A University of British Columbia study in 2011 that found “the correlation between aluminum [an adjuvant] in vaccines and [autism] may be causal.” (More “junk science,” say the propagandists.)

A 2011 rat study out of Warsaw, Poland, found thimerosal in vaccines given at a young age could contribute to neurodevelopmental disorders. (Proves nothing, say critics.)

A Chinese study in 2012 suggested that febrile seizures (an acknowledged side effect of some vaccines) and family history of neuropsychiatric disorders correlate with autistic regression.

A 2012 study from the Neurochemistry Research Marie Curie Chairs Program in Poland found that newborn exposure to vaccines with thimerosal (such as flu shots) might cause gluten-related brain injuries.

In 2013, neurosurgeons at the Methodist Neurological Institute found that children with mild mitochondrial defect may be highly susceptible to toxins like the vaccine preservative thimerosal found in vaccines such as flu shots. (“Too small” of a study, say the critics.)

Then, there’s a 2004 Columbia University study presented at the Institute of Medicine. It found that mice predisposed for genetic autoimmune disorder developed autistic-like behavior after receiving mercury-containing vaccines. (Critics say that’s not proof, and the work was not replicable.)

There’s Dr. William Thompson, the current CDC senior scientist, who has come forward with an extraordinary statement to say that he and his agency have engaged in long-term efforts to obscure a study’s significant link between vaccines and autism, heightened in African-American boys. (The CDC says the data changes made were for legitimate reasons.)

There’s the current CDC immunization safety director who acknowledged to me that it’s possible vaccines may

## THE FORMER SCIENTISTS FROM MERCK, MAKER OF THE MMR VACCINE IN QUESTION, HAVE TURNED INTO WHISTLEBLOWERS AND ACCUSE THEIR COMPANY OF COMMITTING VACCINE FRAUD.

rarely trigger autism in children who are biologically or genetically susceptible to vaccine injury.

There's the case of Hannah Poling, in which the government secretly admitted multiple vaccines given in one day triggered her brain injuries, including autism, then paid a multi-million dollar settlement, and had the case sealed from the prying public eyes under a confidentiality order.

There was the former head of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Bernadine Healy, who stoked her peers' ire by publicly stating that the vaccine-autism link was not a "myth" as so many tried to claim. She disclosed that her colleagues at the Institute of Medicine did not wish to investigate the possible link because they feared the impact it would have on the vaccination program.

There's former CDC researcher Poul Thorsen, whose studies dispelled a vaccine-autism link. He's now a "most wanted fugitive" after being charged with 13 counts of wire fraud and nine counts of money laundering for allegedly using CDC grants of tax dollars to buy a house and cars for himself.

And there are the former scientists from Merck, maker of the MMR vaccine in question, who have turned into whistleblowers and accuse their company of committing vaccine fraud.

### The Spin

If you want to review research and evidence on the other side, a simple Internet search will easily turn up everything you want to know. Those studies always seem to get covered in the news. They somehow turn up first in Google search results, along with the reports and blogs disparaging all opposing science and news reporting.

You might run across a February article in *The New York Times*. It treated the vaccine autism theory as if it comes down to a disagreement between emotionally fragile parents of autistic children and real research: "faith" and "feeling" versus hard science.

"Some parents feel certain that vaccines can lead to autism," stated the article, and "the vaccine-autism link has continued to be accepted on faith by some."

You might run across this network news story that uses Dr. Paul Offit as an expert on vaccine safety. He's introduced as "director of the Vaccine Education Center

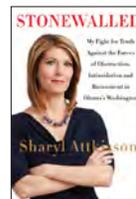
at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia" and he "denies a connection with vaccination and autism."

Somehow, it goes unreported that Offit has made millions (he won't disclose exactly how much) inventing a vaccine for Merck, which makes the MMR vaccine in question. Offit's rotavirus vaccine has, itself, been the subject of safety concerns. And his employment at Children's Hospital has been funded in part by \$1.5 million given by Merck. In addition, he got caught giving false and disparaging information regarding a report I did exposing his financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry he so vigorously defends. His false statements were corrected by the publication that originally reported them. Offit and his book publisher settled a libel accusation by a vaccine safety advocate who accused Offit of fabricating a disparaging conversation in his book, *Autism's False Prophets*. Offit agreed to apologize, correct the book and make a donation to an autism charity.

But to the news, none of that matters. Offit is simply presented as an unbiased expert.

The supposed best medical experts in the world who deny vaccines have anything to do with autism remain at an utter loss to explain this generation's epidemic. To declare the science "settled" and the debate "over" is to defy the plain fact that many scientists worldwide are still sorting through it, and millions of people are still debating it.

The body of evidence on both sides is open to interpretation. People have every right to disbelieve the studies on one side. But it is disingenuous to pretend they do not exist. 



Sharyl Attkisson is an investigative journalist and author of the New York Times bestseller *Stonewalled*. Attkisson will be hosting a new, national Sunday program this fall focusing on investigative and accountability reporting. She is the recipient of five Emmy Awards and the Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative reporting, including for such topics as the Bush administration's involvement in the TARP bank bailout and the Obama administration's Fast and Furious ATF scandal. She recently testified separately to the House and Senate about government secrecy and intrusion. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystowellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystowellness.org/references.html).

# HALF EMPTY

## The editor in chief of the world's best-known medical journal claims that half of all scientific literature is false

By Arjun Walia

In the past few years more professionals have come forward to share a truth that, for many people, proves difficult to swallow. One such authority is Dr. Richard Horton, the current editor in chief of *The Lancet*, one of the most well respected peer-reviewed medical journals in the world.

Dr. Horton published a statement in April declaring that a lot of published research is unreliable at best, if not completely false.

*"The case against science is straightforward: much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue. Afflicted by studies with small sample sizes, tiny effects, invalid exploratory analyses, and flagrant conflicts of interest, together with an obsession for pursuing fashionable trends of dubious importance, science has taken a turn towards darkness."*

This is quite disturbing, given the fact that all of these studies (which are industry-sponsored) are used to develop drugs and vaccines, train medical staff, educate medical students and more.

Many people dismiss a lot of great work by experts and researchers at various institutions around the globe which isn't peer-reviewed and doesn't appear in a "credible" medical journal, but as we can see, "peer-reviewed" doesn't really mean much anymore. "Credible" medical journals continue to lose their tenability in the eyes of experts and employees of the journals themselves, like Dr. Horton.

He also calls himself out in a sense, stating that journal editors aid and abet the worst behaviors, that the amount of bad research is alarming, and that data is sculpted to fit a preferred theory. He goes on to observe that important confirmations are often rejected and little is done to correct bad practices. Much of what goes on could even be considered borderline misconduct.

Dr. Marcia Angell, a physician and longtime editor in chief of the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*, another of the most prestigious peer-reviewed medical journals in the world, makes her view of the subject quite plain:

*"It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to*

*rely on the judgment of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor of the New England Journal of Medicine."*

That it is quite the statement, and it comes from someone who held a position similar to Dr. Horton's.

There is much more than anecdotal evidence to support these claims, however, including documents obtained by Lucija Tomljenovic, Ph.D., from the Neural Dynamics Research Group in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of British Columbia, which reveal that vaccine manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, and health authorities have known about multiple dangers associated with vaccines but chose to withhold them from the public. This is scientific fraud, and their complicity suggests that this practice continues to this day.

This is just one of many examples, and alludes to Dr. Horton's point about the omission of data. For the sake of time, I encourage you to do your own research on this subject. I just wanted to provide some food for thought about something that is not often considered when it comes to medical research, and the resulting products and theories which are sold to us based on that research.

It's truly a remarkable time to be alive. Over the course of human history, our planet has experienced multiple paradigm shifts, all of which were met with harsh resistance at the time of their revelation. One great example is when we realized the Earth was not flat. Today, we are seeing these kinds of shifts in thinking happen in multiple spheres, all at one time. It can seem overwhelming for those who are paying attention, especially since a lot of these ideas go against current belief systems. There will always be resistance to new information which does not fit into the current framework, regardless of how reasonable (or factual) that information might be. 📍



After Arjun Walia finished university, he started writing for *collective-evolution.com*, an organization that aspires to create big change on the planet.

View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).

# BLACKMAIL AND THE MEDICAL VACCINE EXEMPTION

By Barbara Loe Fisher

**V**accine risks for you or your child can range from zero to 100 percent, depending upon the genes you were born with, your microbiome DNA, the environment you live in, your age and health at the time of vaccination, and the type and how many vaccines you get.

Vaccines are not safe or effective for everyone because we are not all the same and we do not all respond the same way to pharmaceutical products like vaccines.

Our response to infectious diseases and the risk for complications can also vary, depending upon our genes, environment, age and health at the time of infection. That is why malnourished, vitamin-deficient children living in impoverished environments, for example, are at higher risk for complications from gastrointestinal, respiratory and other childhood infections.

## **Vaccinators Do Not Know if the Odds Will Be in Your Favor**

The doctor or nurse giving vaccines to you or your child does not know whether the odds will be in your favor. You may get vaccinated and have no reaction, or your immune system and brain function could be severely compromised. The scientific literature is clear about that fact, and so are Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court, which have declared vaccines to be “unavoidably unsafe” and shielded the pharmaceutical industry from vaccine injury lawsuits.

Since 1988, there have been thousands of children and adults in America who have suffered brain inflammation and other long-recognized vaccine reactions and have been awarded \$3 billion in vaccine injury compensation. There are thousands more who have been unable to secure federal compensation for their vaccine injuries.



“THE ENDS JUSTIFIES THE MEANS,” HAS BEEN USED BY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS AND MEDICAL TRADE GROUPS TO NARROW THE MEDICAL VACCINE EXEMPTION. TODAY, ALMOST NO MEDICAL CONDITION QUALIFIES AS AN “OFFICIAL” REASON (CONTRAINDICATION) FOR A DOCTOR TO GRANT SOMEONE A MEDICAL EXEMPTION TO VACCINATION.

### **Vaccines Recommended and Given in a Vacuum of Scientific Knowledge**

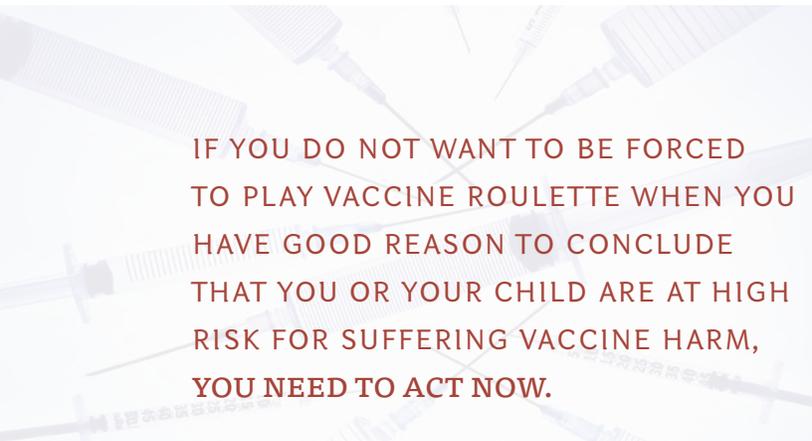
Doctors and nurses are not taught about the genetic, biological and environmental high-risk factors that could make you or your child more vulnerable to experiencing disabling vaccine complications. Vaccines are being recommended and given in a vacuum of knowledge, and vaccine policymakers know it. As many Institute of Medicine committees have repeatedly pointed out in published reports spanning a quarter century, there are huge gaps in vaccine safety science.

Vaccine safety research is not a priority because long ago public health officials made a calculated decision that the lives of those harmed by vaccines are expendable in order to pursue what they consider to be a more important goal: the eradication of a long list of infectious microorganisms through compulsory vaccine use. When vaccine risks turn out to be 100 percent for you or your child, you are expected to quietly accept that you are unavoidable collateral damage in the war on microorganisms.

### **Almost No Medical Condition Qualifies for Medical Vaccine Exemption**

This cruel, utilitarian rationale, also known as “the ends justifies the means,” has been used by public health officials and medical trade groups to narrow the medical vaccine exemption so that, today, almost no medical condition qualifies as an “official” reason (contraindication) for a doctor to grant someone a medical exemption to vaccination. At the same time, there are no good biological mechanism studies or large clinical trials validating the safety of severely restricting the medical vaccine exemption. Then again, there is no independent oversight on the quality and quantity of the science used to make vaccine policies and laws in the U.S., either.

Basically, the Centers for Disease Control now tells doctors that a medical vaccine exemption should only be granted if you are one of the estimated 320,000 children and adults annually receiving chemotherapy; or one of the estimated 47,000 Americans who have had a recent organ or blood cell transplant; or if your child



IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE FORCED TO PLAY VACCINE ROULETTE WHEN YOU HAVE GOOD REASON TO CONCLUDE THAT YOU OR YOUR CHILD ARE AT HIGH RISK FOR SUFFERING VACCINE HARM, YOU NEED TO ACT NOW.



is one of the 40 to 100 children born every year with severe combined immunodeficiency, known as SCID.

Once you are done with chemo, no medical vaccine exemption for you. Once you have recovered from your organ or blood cell transplant, no medical vaccine exemption for you. And if you are immunosuppressed but don't have SCID, the rarest and most severe of all immunodeficiency disorders, in most cases no medical exemption for you.

**No Medical Exemption for Immune and Brain Disorders, Genetic Susceptibility**

If you or your child are already suffering with autoimmune or brain disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, inflammatory bowel syndrome, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy or an immunosuppressive disease like HIV, no medical vaccine exemption for you.

If you or your child have a family history of severe allergies, vaccine reactions, seizures, sudden infant death syndrome or serious autoimmune and neurological disorders, no medical vaccine exemption for you.

**No Medical Exemption for Sickness, Many Previous Vaccine Reactions**

If you or your child are sick at the time of vaccination with a fever or on antibiotics, no medical vaccine exemption for you.

If, after vaccination, you or your child ran a 105-degree fever, collapsed or had seizures and symptoms of brain inflammation followed by serious health deterioration and you are still chronically ill but a doctor disagrees that your continuing health problems were caused by vaccination, no medical vaccine exemption for you.

**No Medical Exemption for Pregnancy, Siblings of Vaccine Injured, Premature Infants**

If you are a pregnant healthcare worker and do not want to get a flu shot while you are pregnant because you do not want to risk a miscarriage, no medical vaccine exemption for you.

If your child was injured or died after vaccination and you want to protect your other children from vaccine injury, no medical vaccine exemption for your children.

If your baby was born prematurely and is low weight and struggling to survive, no medical vaccine exemption for your infant.

**Obey Liability-Free Doctors' Vaccine Orders or Be Punished**

For all practical purposes, the Centers for Disease Control and medical trade organizations now direct pediatricians and other vaccinators to deny the medical vaccine exemption to 99.99 percent of Americans. Although nobody can predict whether the odds will be in your favor, you are expected to obey doctors' orders and get

and give your children every government-recommended vaccine—no exceptions and no questions asked—or be subjected to threats, coercion, discrimination and denial of medical care, education and employment.

Like drug companies selling vaccines, doctors giving vaccines are protected from vaccine injury lawsuits. If a doctor vaccinates you or your child against your will and you suffer a catastrophic vaccine reaction, you cannot seek justice in a civil court of law in front of a jury of your peers. Without accountability or liability, there is strong incentive for vaccinators to implement government vaccine policy and deny vaccine harm—but little incentive to prevent vaccine harm.

### **Eliminating Nonmedical Exemptions to Blackmail Americans**

Now public health and medical trade groups are pressuring legislators to pass laws that would not only eliminate nonmedical religious and conscientious belief vaccine exemptions for children to attend school, but also would require children to get every one of the 69 doses of 16 federally recommended vaccines—unless a parent can get a medical vaccine exemption from a doctor. This vaccine dragnet, which is already being applied to healthcare workers, is also pulling in childcare workers and teachers as proposed new vaccine laws threaten them with loss of employment if they cannot find a doctor to write a medical vaccine exemption.

Zealously pursuing a 99.99 percent vaccination rate and using very small groups of immune compromised individuals as an excuse to eliminate all nonmedical vaccine exemptions, liability-free doctors want permission from lawmakers to blackmail virtually every American into playing vaccine roulette. And they want to do this in the absence of sound vaccine safety science, even for those potentially at higher risk of suffering vaccine harm.

Philosopher and human rights advocate Elie Wiesel once said, “When you take an idea or a concept and turn it into an abstraction, that opens the way to take human beings and turn *them*, also, into abstractions. When human beings become abstractions, what is left?”

### **Cruel and Inhuman to Last Degree**

In 1905, when the U.S. Supreme Court in *Jacobsen v. Massachusetts* affirmed the right of states to mandate smallpox vaccination, the Court warned legislatures that it was not condoning vaccination of persons for whom the medical procedure would be “cruel and inhuman to the last degree,” adding that “all laws should receive a sensible construction.”

The inalienable right to autonomy and free exercise of conscience to protect bodily integrity trumps the right of government to use our bodies for any purpose, which is why informed consent to vaccine risk-taking and

flexible medical, religious and conscientious belief vaccine exemptions must remain a legal right in America.

### **Act Now to Protect Bodily Integrity and Free Exercise of Conscience**

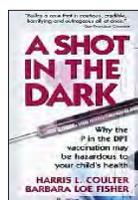
If you want the legal right to freely exercise conscience and protect your bodily integrity or that of your child when it comes to vaccine risk-taking, if you do not want to wake up one day and be forced to play vaccine roulette when you have good reason to conclude that you or your child are at high risk of suffering vaccine harm, you need to act now. You can be sure that the odds definitely will not be in your favor when it comes to finding a doctor to grant you a medical vaccine exemption.

Go to [NVIC.org](http://NVIC.org) and learn more about infectious diseases and vaccines. Sign up for the NVIC Advocacy Portal today and join the thousands of intelligent, concerned and courageous Americans standing up and speaking out in states across this country in defense of the human right to informed consent to medical risk-taking.

Please take action now.

It's your health. Your family. Your choice. 📌

Editor's Note: PATHWAYS encourages parents to engage in critical thinking and defend their natural right to make informed, voluntary health choices for their children, including choices about vaccination.



*Barbara Loe Fisher is cofounder and president of the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), a nonprofit charity she co-founded in 1982 with parents of vaccine injured children. She is co-author with Harris Coultter of the seminal 1985 book, DPT: A Shot in the Dark, which was the first major, well-documented critique of America's mass vaccination system. She is author of The Consumer's Guide to Childhood Vaccines; Vaccines, Autism & Chronic Inflammation: The New Epidemic, and Reforming Vaccine Policy and Law: A Guide. Barbara is a leading nonmedical expert on vaccine science, policy and law, and has served on vaccine advisory*

*committees and testified before state legislatures and the U.S. Congress on vaccine safety and informed consent issues. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*

# URGENT CALL TO ACTION

**Your Health. Your Family. Your Choice!** By Andrea Marconi, D.C., CACCP

I am a mother, a concerned citizen and a chiropractor operating a family wellness clinic for more than a decade, working to educate the masses. I have experienced more sleepless nights than normal these last several months, tossing and turning, feeling an overwhelming sense of urgency to defend our freedom to make informed health choices which, without question, is being attacked and is about to be taken away from us.

I have great concern for the future and my right as a parent to protect my children's health and exercise informed consent when it comes to vaccination. I see and hear the media today calling for all nonmedical vaccine exemptions to be eliminated from state vaccine laws and I know it is my responsibility to do something as a mother and as a health advocate.

What is happening goes beyond the present topic of vaccines. The assault on the right to make vaccine choices carries with it even more destruction as it relates to the rights of American families across the board, whether it be the right to eat GMO-free food, homeschool our children or have a baby at home, for that matter.

We as chiropractors hold a unique and powerful position within the health model adhering to the belief that the body's inherent ability to fend off disease is directly related to our state of overall well-being. The job of the chiropractor is to allow and support the optimal function of the body's innate intelligence without the addition or subtraction of anything. Bottom line: The vast majority of human infants are born healthy and have an inherent ability to heal and stay well.

I hold a promise to myself to always strive to work on tasks larger than myself. As of 2015 I am lending time to work with Barbara Loe Fisher of NVIC, offering what I can to reach outside my clinic walls to engage my colleagues during this historic moment in time.

So what action steps are readily available to support and protect the legal right of American families to make voluntary vaccine choices? This question was recently raised and got me thinking.

Over the years I have found directing clients, friends and family to the NVIC.org website to be very effective. I highlight the NVIC Advocacy Portal, which is a fabulous feature that allows you and the families in your practice to stay current with vaccine legislation moving in your own home state. It's free, fast and reliable and



any concerned citizen can register and use it. Within moments of registering, you will receive Action Alert e-mails that let you know you need to take action to support or oppose a bill that affects your right to make vaccine choices. NVIC will provide steps, tools and connection to leaders and organizations allowing you to make a positive impact on protecting your right to exercise informed consent in the vaccination decision-making process.

I cannot say enough about how the knowledgeable website at NVIC.org has provided support for me as a trusted practitioner serving my clients. With confidence I am able to direct clients to NVIC's website, where they can become educated and ultimately decide what is right for them.

Consider sharing the benefits of using the NVIC Advocacy Portal during the precious moments you spend with your clients, friends and family in the coming days, weeks and months. Vaccine bills have been introduced in multiple states this year to take away nonmedical vaccine exemptions, including those for religious, philosophical and conscientious beliefs, and these bills are moving at lightning speed through state legislatures. Vermont legislators voted to strip the philosophical exemption from school admission laws this spring, and special-interest lobbyists are working hard to take both the religious and personal belief exemptions away in California.

In many states—from Washington and Oregon to Maryland, North Carolina and Texas—NVIC has successfully helped families take grassroots action and fight off bad bills that threaten our legal right to exercise nonmedical vaccine exemptions. Now more than ever, we need to inform the families who depend upon us for good advice that we stand with them and are encouraging them to get involved and stand up for human, civil and parental rights.

The chiropractic profession can be a leader in making sure our voice is heard and helping to give the people we serve a voice. I look forward to working with all of you in this important struggle to preserve our right to make informed, voluntary health choices for ourselves and our children.

In Health,  
Andrea Marconi, D.C., CACCP  
Director of Professional Resources  
National Vaccine Information Center, NVIC.org

# Choose your information wisely



## Celebrating Conscious Choice!

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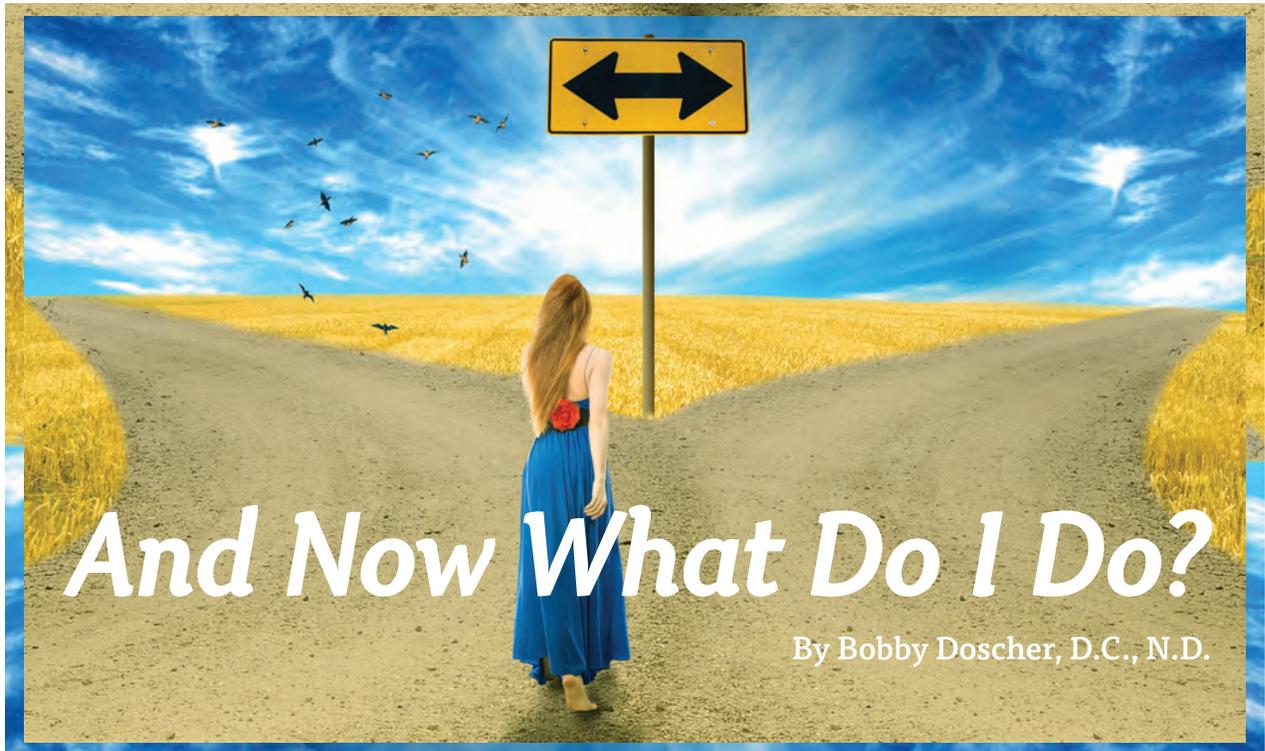


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**A**s a last resort, desperate parents turn to chiropractic to help their children and to find help that they have not been able to find elsewhere. At Oklahaven Children’s Chiropractic Center, many mothers have told us that deep down in their hearts they knew something was wrong. They saw their children’s eyes grow dull as their vitality and life force slowly drained away, leaving them lethargic. They were unable to process information, connect to people, or enjoy life.

It seems that every year the children who come to us have more neurological problems than the children who came in previous years. In our travels to other countries, we have observed that young people in these places have stronger recuperation powers and that they return to health faster, just like those we saw at Oklahaven 30 years ago. It seems to us that we have saved the whales but not the children.

In my book, *And Now What Do I Do?*, I cover the essentials we have discovered at Oklahaven that are critical to the health and healing of our children; it brings the true force of chiropractic to parents. The premise is about the innate intelligence of the body and how the recuperative power demonstrates itself as the neurologically disorganized child becomes organized. The book is an essential guide to parents and caregivers in healing these children.

The path to true health is not an easy one. It takes unwavering commitment and boundless patience on the parts of both the child and the parent. At first, there may be great changes. As it progresses, the path will likely

be challenging, but the changes smaller. However, each tiny change will lead to larger ones as power is restored within the body. With time, restoring from the inside out will result in health and a return of full function.

Neurologically damaged children lack the energy to be grounded. To be happy and healthy, they must have enough power to spin in space, so to speak. This allows the body to handle and respond with awareness and to make choices about whatever forces the child faces. One of the major elements a child develops is adaptability. Responding is far different than reacting, a negative force.

As a human in the playground of life, coping with emotions becomes a challenging issue. Along with anger and frustration, fear—whether real or imagined—is a basic instinct learned at birth. Fear not only cuts off love and self-esteem, it also results in a myriad of aches, pains and distorted function.

Learning to deal with human emotions is a challenge everyone must face. In the end, love is the key to a joyful and peaceful heart that provides the way to true health.

All of us have an innate recuperative power that, given time, will enable us to recover and thrive. Following some basic healing principles, chiropractic care and proper nutrition, a return to health and hope for your child can become a reality.

We can tell you how chiropractic has helped other children and their families. We can make recommendations, but your success is up to you and your openness to the chiropractic premise and the way it specifically resonates within you.

We realize for most parents this information is new and possibly difficult to comprehend. We ask that you become informed, listen, weigh our suggestions, ask yourself questions, be open, and then decide if you can commit to the natural way of life for your child. For many parents, this is an easy decision; for others, it is all but impossible.

We have found that as you begin to walk on this natural path, your fears will fall away. You'll see the light return to your child's eyes. His or her face will be more frequently bathed in smiles, and hope will fill your heart where tears and frustrations once resided. You'll see your child focused, absorbed in tasks, concentrating, being creative, and experiencing greater enjoyment of life.

Your journey will give you great internal strength. If you are feeling broken, know that there is hope and time for healing. If you are thinking this is your last resort, look at it instead as your first step. Now is the time to look at life through your heart and see the unlimited possibilities of health and happiness for you and your child.

Children's bodies can respond quickly, becoming strong, interactive and healthy. Health is a responsibility and requires discipline. The chiropractic lifestyle is a way of life. This won't happen overnight, but it will happen. With an attitude of gratitude, you will see the small changes in your child. Through time, discipline and commitment, your child can be well. It is up to you and your child.

As you embark on this long and arduous journey, keep these words in mind:

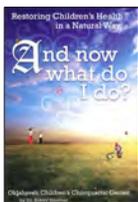
*Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt will have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on yesterdays.*

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON



Bobby Doscher, D.C., N.D., is the president and chief executive officer of the nonprofit Oklahaven Children's Chiropractic Center in Oklahoma City, which is celebrating its 53rd year of helping severely hurt children return to health in a natural way. For the chiropractic profession's centennial year, she was chosen by the World Congress of Women Chiropractors as the "Woman Chiropractor of the Year" and "one of the twelve great women in the history of chiropractic." During Dr. Doscher's 30-year tenure with the clinic, the center has received national and international recognition. She frequently lectures at chiropractic colleges throughout the world, as well as at national and

international conferences. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).



## The Philosophy of Oklahaven and Chiropractic

The majority of children who come to the Oklahaven Children's Chiropractic Center have run the gamut of traditional medicine. Their families are burdened with debts totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. Parents have lost their jobs, and most have lost hope.

As the children improve with each adjustment, restoring their health through their own recuperative powers, parents see miracles happen that help their children reach meaningful lives.

Babies hold their heads up for the first time, sleep through the night, stop seizing, eat without pain. A child feeds himself, learns to move independently, speaks clearly without a stutter, or runs and plays like a normal child, without asthma or chronic ear infections.

The chiropractic premise is that subluxations are due to stress, trauma and poisons within the body that cause function to diminish. Increasing numbers of young children are now showing more severe conditions and chronic degenerative diseases.

Consistent well-being helps children face the necessary challenges in their lives, through which they gain the wisdom to spiritually unfold and appreciate the love of life. A diminished life force sets up negative patterns of response. We see the life force return to the children's eyes as their health is restored.

### Chiropractic Based on Scientific Fact

Since its beginning, chiropractic has been based on the scientific fact that the nervous system controls the function of every cell, tissue, organ and system of your body. While the brain is protected by the skull, the spinal cord is more vulnerable, covered by 24 moving vertebrae. When these bones lose their normal motion or position, they can irritate the nervous system. This disrupts the function of the tissues or organs these nerves control; this is called vertebral subluxation complex.

At the Oklahaven Children's Chiropractic Center, hope has been restored with happier, healthier, drug-free lifestyles.

Our stories show how successful teaching of the chiropractic premise develops a parent's consciousness about natural healthcare and the body's recuperative power. With each family and referral, since 1962 Oklahaven has quietly built a network of love and inspiration for severely hurt children. The center is a mentor organization to chiropractors nationwide.

# Giavanna's JOURNEY

By Denise Goodman



**GIA HAS COME SO FAR IN SIX MONTHS, SO MUCH FURTHER THAN SHE EVER HAD IN THE PAST 11 YEARS WITH MEDICAL TREATMENT.**

I would like to tell you about my daughter. Giavanna was born with myelomeningocele, the worst form of spina bifida, an opening in the L4 and L5 region of the spine.

Her first surgery, on the day she was born, closed the opening that was affecting her bladder, bowels and lower extremity function. This caused fluid to develop in Gia's brain, resulting in hydrocephalus; a second surgery placed a ventricle shunt in her head.

She had to be catheterized multiple times during the day to fully drain her bladder, leading to bladder infections. Guilt-ridden, I set out to do the "right thing," and listened to our doctors. For the first 10 months of her life, Gia was on a maintenance dose of Bactrim, an antibiotic intended to stop bladder infections. When that did not work, doctors put her on stronger antibiotics. At 12 months, she contracted pseudomonas, an opportunistic infection which only appears when a person's immune system is already impaired. The treatment was more antibiotics into her main artery via a chest port. She had surgery to place a port in her chest, connected to her main artery, and was injected with more antibiotics for one full month. Thankfully, the pseudomonas cleared up, but the bladder infections continued.

Despite these afflictions, she was still growing and learning on the same level and age as a "normal" child. Her vocabulary of 20 words was strong and understandable. She was happy and would laugh, a loving child despite all this heartache. She was a beautiful little girl, with her own method of communication and a loving smile for all she met.

At 15 months, Gia received her routine vaccinations. Within the month, Gia stopped speaking. She would start screaming and cover her ears. No one could touch her; she would gag when certain foods were put in her mouth. She stopped making eye contact and would sway back and forth to soothe herself.

I didn't know what to do or where to turn. Gia's pediatrician set up a visit with a group of doctors at Children's Hospital: she was diagnosed with autistic behavior. Now my child was disabled mentally and physically. I prayed to God to give me strength, and to thank him for my baby. But it was very hard. Everything around me was falling apart, and it seemed to be getting worse, not better.

So for the first seven years of her life, Gia was in and out of the hospital countless times for bladder

infections, bladder surgery, three shunt revisions and finally a shunt replacement.

At age 6, Gia started public school; I could not afford the day care. Insurance paid for some of her therapies, and I paid for the rest. All of this took a toll on me financially.

At the school, Gia was known only for her disabilities. Nothing the therapists spoke of was promising. From their point of view, Gia would never progress mentally or physically. Plus, the therapy they were doing seemed to make Gia tighten up rather than become more flexible.

### **A Ray of Hope**

Then on April 29, 2014, things changed dramatically for Gia. I had heard of Dr. Bobby and Oklahaven years before, when a man I worked with told me about the amazing things they have accomplished with children. At that point in my life, I was not prepared for the commitment needed to fully focus on Gia. But now another friend reintroduced me to this amazing woman and offered to pay for Gia's first visits. Gia's new journey has begun; life has come full circle.

Dr. Bobby is a chiropractor and she believes that if a child and parent can envision the healing, it will begin to happen with time. We are all human beings full of light and life. When we become injured or are full of toxins in our body, the light and movement diminishes; hence we have disease and disability.

When you first meet Dr. Bobby, you don't know what to expect. You think to yourself, "She has no clue what I've been dealing with. My kid will never do this. And she wants me to do what, or knows my kid can do what?"

No one had ever given me help before in making my child less dependent on me and more independent for herself. Dr. Bobby has very simple philosophies and ideals. They are straightforward and simple, and have been around for many years.

- Be willing as a parent to see the light within your child as a spiritual being. Believe that she will become whole. Your child is an individual with individual gifts.
- Do not accept labels. Labels contribute to limiting your child's abilities.
- An all-natural diet with no processed foods and no pasteurized milk, but a lot of good water, vegetables, fruits, grains, beans and nuts.
- Rules must be set in place, with consequences for good and bad behavior.
- There must be gratitude, from the child and the parent.
- No medications at all.

The first week with Dr. Bobby was about getting to know each other. What were all our strengths and weaknesses? What did I expect from my child? What type of schedule did I have in place for adjustments, activities,

exercises, food and behavior? Dr. Bobby made me look at my own independence as well as Gia's. We were shackled to each other and I didn't even know it.

I talked to Gia as if she were her disability, instead of an intelligent human being. I also was guilty of labeling my child and inhibiting her from what she could do.



GIA'S VOCABULARY HAS IMPROVED,  
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I AM PATIENTLY MAKING HER  
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HER TO CARRY ON CONVERSATION.

I had become very knowledgeable about all of the medical terms associated with Gia. I felt it made me closer to her and gave me a better understanding of my child. But the more I labeled her, the more she depended on me.

#### **Incredible Changes**

When Gia first came to Oklahaven, her body was twisted in ways you could not imagine. Her left arm curled up and she did not use it. Her feet were twisted up and behind to her calf, almost in the opposite direction, like a flower that had not unfolded. Her legs were frogged and did not stretch out. Her muscles were very tight. It was hard to change her diaper. When Gia sat up, she would fall over. Gia could not crawl or creep correctly, normal or low. She could not speak clearly. Gia was not very active.

After the first visit at Oklahaven, Gia's neck subluxation was corrected and her eyes unlocked. The first thing I had to do was to get rid of Gia's glasses and start allowing her eyes to move freely. When I put the glasses back on during the process of her eyes correcting themselves, I found that her head and body began to go back to the way it was before. It has been six months since Gia has worn glasses; her eyes are straight, her head is straight, and she can see. It is amazing.

Gia has come so far in six months, so much further than she ever had in the past 11 years with medical treatment. Her forehead used to protrude, almost Neanderthal-like; now it's becoming more proportioned. Her eyes are brighter, not crossed. She can sit in a dining room chair without any help: She sits very straight, able to eat and do her schoolwork at the table with little or no help.

Gia's lower back was severely twisted. Her spine has straightened and the hump at the end of her spine has diminished. Before, Gia was not able to crawl; now she



can. And because she's more mobile, she has become more curious.

She is homeschooled, and has become faster at math and reading. Her fine motor skills have improved: She can now use her left hand along with her right. She can buckle her seatbelt, and put on her socks, shoes, shirt, and pants by herself.

Her vocabulary has improved, and she is speaking more clearly when she wants something. I am patiently making her answer questions and teaching her to carry on conversation.

Gia was not able to stand on her knees. She now stands for 45 minutes, and sometimes more. She uses a small stool to sit on, with her feet now flat on the ground. We practice standing from the sitting position.

Gia's interaction with the family is amazing; she loves to play with her brothers and sisters. She is also starting to play pranks on them. She never did this before. She would laugh at her siblings, but not interact like she does now. I am learning patience, commitment and gratitude. Life looks brighter now, for Gia, our family, and for me. We continue to grow. We are becoming less dependent and more self-reliant.

It's been a long and challenging journey, and I know it's not over. We have many more lessons to learn, but thanks to Oklahaven, we are both becoming more independent. 

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*Denise Goodman is Giavanna's mother. She has worked tirelessly to help Gia have the best possible care. When she found Oklahaven, she opened her lives to a new world of healing through chiropractic; the quality of life for the entire family improved significantly. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*



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# 3 Ways to Activate Your Inner Healing Potential

By Michelle K. Nielsen, D.C.

**L**iving in health and holistic harmony can be challenging in today's toxic, fast-paced world. However, you can activate your internal healer to help you repair the damage done to your body, mind and spirit.

One of the principles of a vitalistic outlook of health is that the body is a self-healing and self-organizing organism. It is designed to work properly when it is treated well and given the correct resources.

Within it resides an innate intelligence, which is like your own internal doctor. Your innate intelligence works tirelessly day in and day out to maintain your body's natural balance (homeostasis) and keep you healthy.

Take a moment to marvel at what your innate intelligence does for you every day, without you having to even think about it:

- Your heart beats approximately 110,000 times per day to send nutrients and vitality to all your organs, tissues and cells.
- Your lungs breathe up to 30,000 times per day to send vital oxygen to your system.
- Your 700-plus muscles work constantly to allow you to move, dance and smile.
- Your body eliminates, repairs and rebuilds its 37.2 trillion cells approximately every 6 months.

Your innate intelligence works so hard for you and asks for so little in return. This doctor within really is a powerful and wise physician!

When you appreciate and trust your body's own internal healing mechanism, you will find yourself treating your body with more respect as you look for health-enhancing activities rather than symptom-reducing drugs.

Here are three ways that you can instantly enhance your body's self-healing capacity and activate your internal doctor.



*Take care of  
your mind.*

Your thoughts create a physiological effect in your body. Stressful thoughts of anger, impatience and frustration stimulate the release of damaging hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine. Positive thoughts create health-enhancing hormones such as the feel-good endorphins that are stimulated through exercise.

Create an easy stress-management routine to cleanse your mind of negativity, such as meditation or daily exercise. Even a short 5-minute meditation can serve as a "mental shower," leaving your mind refreshed and renewed, and ridding it of the toxic negativity that has built up during the day.



## Take care of your nerve system.

Your nerve system plays an important role in your health, as it is the master controller of all systems and functions in your body. In utero, the precursor cells of your nerve system were the first to form, setting the stage for all future function (and therefore well-being). Since your spine houses your nerve system, proper alignment of your spine is imperative to normal, healthy function in your body. Minimize the damaging effects of modern life on your spine with daily exercise, yoga, correct posture and especially chiropractic adjustments. Take care of your body and it will take care of you!

Health emergencies are handled well at hospitals and within your doctor's office, but for your day-to-day well-being, your own health depends on you and your choices. Real health comes from within. 🌀

## Take care of your diet.

When you fill your body with highly processed, nutritionally feeble food, you are asking your internal doctor to work longer hours for less pay. Eventually it may rebel and go on strike!

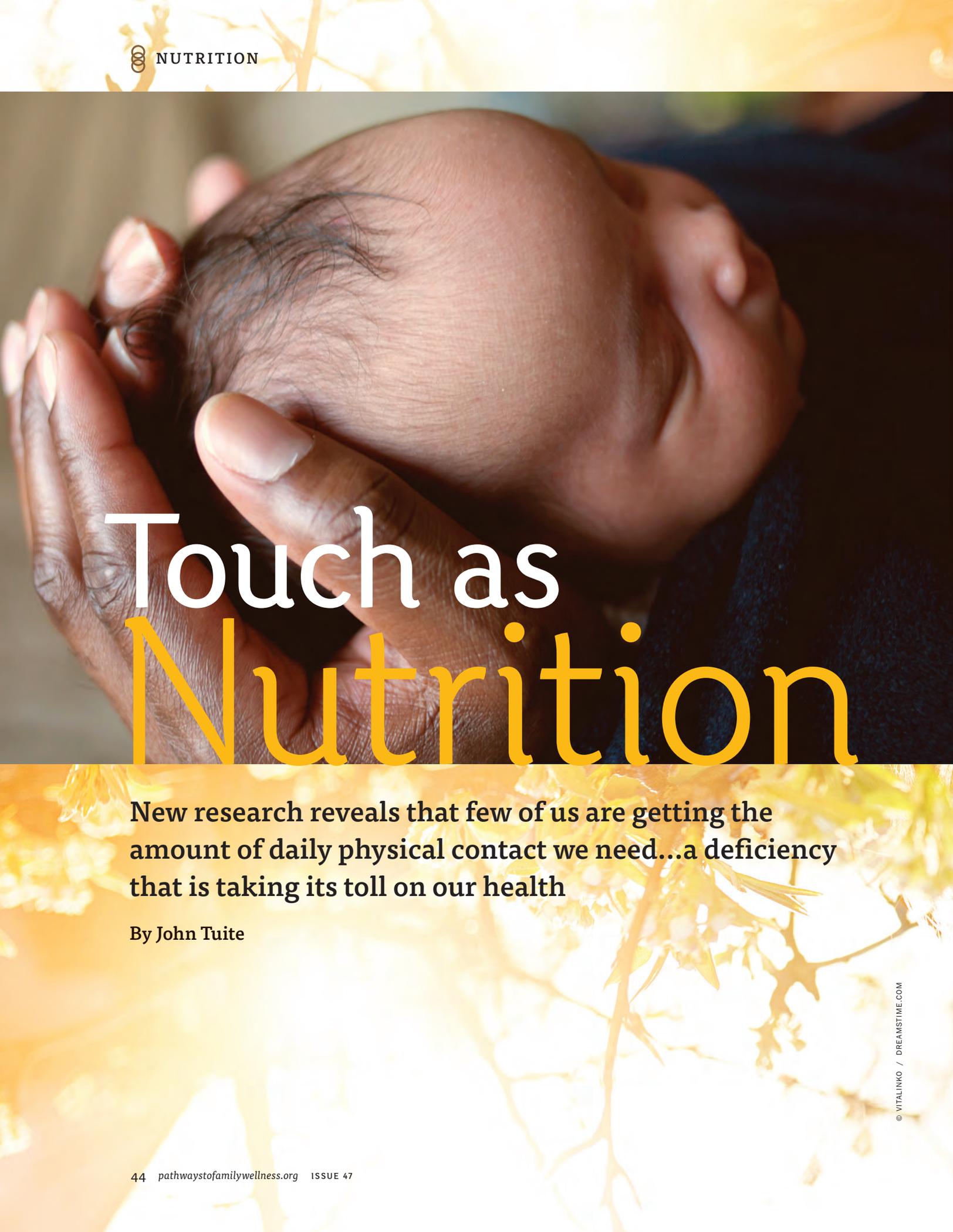
Why not help out your internal doctor and feed your body nutritionally dense food such as fresh fruit, nuts and organic vegetables? Avoid toxins such as white sugar, caffeine, saturated fats and excessive alcohol.

As nutrition expert Cyndi O'Meara of Changing Habits says, "More than 60 percent of death in the world today is a result of diet-related disease. That means that more than half of the world is feeding themselves to death in some capacity. It is time to change, and to use food to heal and not to harm."

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A wellness expert, international speaker and author of *Manifesting Matisse: A Practical System for Reality*, Michelle K. Nielsen, D.C., specializes in "spiritual makeovers." After two decades in chiropractic helping people to heal their physical bodies, Michelle turned her attention toward healing the spirit, beginning a 15-year love affair with meditation and other spiritual practices. Her Meditation Spa app ([tinyurl.com/09xp7q6](http://tinyurl.com/09xp7q6)) marries modern technology with ancient wisdom to make meditation easy and accessible across the globe. For more information on Michelle and her work, visit [MasterManifestors.com](http://MasterManifestors.com), or join her Master Manifestors community on Facebook. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).



# Touch as Nutrition

**New research reveals that few of us are getting the amount of daily physical contact we need...a deficiency that is taking its toll on our health**

**By John Tuite**



**T**ouch could properly be regarded as a form of nutrition.

We mistakenly think that touch occurs on the periphery of our selves, a skin thing. But truthfully, each surface stimulus travels far into the most hidden interior landscapes of our selves, traversing

long nerve cells right through the buried spinal core to enter and gather in the deep folds of our brain. It's not by accident that our skin and brain are each generated from a single ectodermic substance, cascading outward and inward as we grow in the womb, because right at the very root of us, we are built to connect the inner and outer worlds.

The necessity of nurturing touch is very clear when we are at our youngest. Without it, young children wither and even die, even if they are provided with food and medicine.

Slightly older children typically find ways to build a huge, varied diet of touch into their lives, from tumbling unexpectedly onto their parents' shoulders, rolling on the floor with siblings, or wrestling with friends, to cuddling, sitting on knees, being carried, stroked and gently soothed. Children actively shape their sense of self, not just mentally, but with their hands, elbows and knees, their bellies and mouths, inside the frequency, textures and intensities of this constant, rich field of contact.

(This is why non-nurturing, violent or invasive touch can be so devastating for a child: It does harm right in

the deep heartland of a child's emerging identity.)

As we grow up we exchange this banquet of physical contact, all that rough-and-tumble rolling around, for... well, often for very little.

For most of us, growing up coincides with a reduction in the range and quality of our tactile life. Our diet of nurturing physical contact thins out and narrows down. Ask yourself: How did your tactile day go today?

In fact, if we do assign a nutritional value to touch, it is clear that many—perhaps most—adults, regardless of whether they are alone or in partnership, suffer from significant degrees of starvation in this arena. While some adults participate in contact sports or practices, or seek out massage or physical therapies, most do not. While some adults have relationships that offer them a range of healthy touch, most relationships do not. Instead, we have a state of widespread tactile famine, a malnourishment so entrenched we cannot even see that it exists.

We participate in this undernourishing of the body in many ways. The abundance of touching we once offered to others, for example, soon becomes rationed out, reserved for appropriate moments with appropriate people. Unlike the sometimes chaotic, improvised and spontaneous interactions of children at play, almost all of these moments—a handshake, a friendly hug, a pat on a colleague's back—are highly stereotyped, habitual and fairly unconscious exchanges of brief physical contact. Most of these moments also require a highly muted intensity.



Equally, our ascension into adulthood is often accompanied by the acquisition of goods and services that reduce the tactile shock of the world on our systems. Comfortable furniture, convenient transport over smooth highways, and clothes and shoes that protect us from temperature or bumps in the ground: All conspire to soothe and dull the senses, especially touch. We are not numb, but we have arranged the world to induce a kind of torpor compared to what we could experience.

Touch cannot be talked about in polite society. No index of well-being seems to have measured it. But sometimes the absence of touch is acknowledged by proxy. Loneliness is one of its stand-ins. Loneliness has many dimensions, but the absence of being held, stroked or touched is surely one of its most painful characteristics. The U.K. has a particular crisis, coming 26th out of 28 European countries in a survey of who has neighbors or friends to turn to. According to the Campaign to End Loneliness, lacking social connections has an effect on health equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

The loneliness which blights the last years of so many elderly people in our culture is based just as much on a physical deprivation as an emotional one. Two-fifths of elderly people surveyed report that the television is their main company. And we know that loneliness can kill just as assuredly at this end of life as physical isolation can kill at the beginning. Solitary elderly people are almost 50 percent more likely to die early than those who have family, friends or community.

We could talk about poverty of touch just as validly as poverty of wealth; frequently the two go together. Walk around a poor neighborhood, and along with cramped and frayed housing, you will see many people, perhaps adults more than children, for whom reliable and consistent nurturing touch is but a memory, a yearning, perhaps an inflamed wound, rather than a daily, sustaining occurrence.

I am sure that, for some people, turning to aggression and physical violence is an ill-judged act of substitution, motivated by a desperate need for deep, meaningful contact. The shoving, grappling and hitting provide a perverse reminder, a tragic hint of the intense physical significance we all depend on for our sense of mattering in the world.

Individually and collectively, we need to recover a world that will nurture us, and build a society that will sustain rather than erode us. Social and economic policies that prioritize real human need are priorities. But part of this task will also be to regenerate the possibilities of healthy, nurturing touch in our lives and in our culture.

There are many reasons to think this is possible, because half of the work is to simply pay attention to our already existing tactile experience, and to edge it forward just a little. As we pick up the mug of tea, we notice the weight and shape, the particular balance between strength and delicacy the porcelain has achieved, the contrast between the experience of the fingers and the experience of the lips. We can ignore the signs, step



## WE NEED TO RECOVER A WORLD THAT WILL NURTURE US, AND BUILD A SOCIETY THAT WILL SUSTAIN RATHER THAN ERODE US.

off the path and walk on the bumpy grass, among the trees, trailing a hand across their trunks. We can once more hold our partner's hand with some portion of the attention we brought to the miraculous first time we felt those fingers wrap around ours.

With the key in the front door at the end of a stressful day, we can appreciate the ability of children to restore us. They plunge us back into a universe of sensation and tactile experience. They climb on us, tumble over our heads or shoulders, jump on our backs, elbow us and knee us and rough us gloriously up. They break through the crust we have carefully built around our nerve system. They speak to us at a level we have forgotten about, but thirst for: the elemental dimension of physical contact. 🌀



John Tuite is a leadership and embodiment teacher, a writer, the founder of the Centre for Embodied Wisdom. A qualified leadership embodiment teacher/coach, he is also the senior instructor of Southern Shaolin Five Ancestors, a centuries-old martial art. John has practiced this tradition since 1974, appearing in documentaries and performing at international gatherings in China. Previously, John taught and led in challenging London schools for 18 years, serving on leadership teams in four schools. John's writing has appeared in many places, including *Huffington Post*, the *Kindness Blog*, *The Embodiment Journal* and the *Integral Leadership Review*. Prior to teaching he worked as a builder, an arborist and then a councillor. John now lives in East London with his partner and three children. This article originally appeared in *Kindness Blog*, a sharing media featuring kindness in all its varied forms. This blog publishes images, videos, real-life-stories, personal reflections, quotes and other various media which all have one special thing in common...kindness. The article is reprinted here with permission. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).



# THE BITTERSWEET REALITY OF Birth Intervention

By Jennifer Barham-Floreani, B.App.Clin.Sci., B.Chiropractic

**E**very decision we make has a direct impact on our lives or the life of another, whether we foresee that impact or not.

In our daily haste sometimes we don't contemplate how these decisions impact our physical, mental and emotional well-being. With the escalation of autism, ADHD, allergies and obesity in children, more and more parents are questioning the impact of their choices and questioning our current orthodox health model. Parents would do well to consider that the quality of their family's health is determined by the quality of questions that we ask.

Most of us are aware that a child's health can be compromised well before they are born. Therefore, the objective of prenatal care in our modern world should be to arm parents with knowledge and confidence on not only how to strengthen their own health but how parents may be able to nurture and protect the health of their unborn child.

While there seems to be a smorgasbord of options available to couples on how to birth their baby, many couples are unfamiliar with the sequence of events that

can unfold when requesting or agreeing to certain interventions and medical procedures. With this article I'll be exploring the potential short- and long-term effects of cesarean births and epidurals.

## Can Cesarean Births Result in Chronic Disease?

A 2013 article in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* stated, "The disruption of the gut balance has been linked to an increasing number of diseases, including inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer, allergies and asthma."

A great question to ask now is, "What lifestyle factors disrupt our gut balance?"

There are many modern-day choices we make that deplete our important microbial balance or microbial community. For example, it is now increasingly clear that antibiotics destroy the gut's important bacterial balance by killing off not only harmful bacteria but beneficial flora that the body needs to thrive and that antibiotics are best left for emergency "crisis" scenarios.

Other studies also tell us that many pharmaceutical drugs, stress, refined and processed diets, alcohol,

environmental chemicals and genetically modified ingredients all have adverse effects on our gut bacteria or flora leaving us vulnerable to a host of diseases.

Our microbiome, or our body's microbial balance, is essential to human health because the gut, brain and immune systems work intricately together. Our understanding of the importance of this interplay between the gut and the brain is quickly evolving. It was only relatively recently that we learned that 80 percent of our immune system is found in the gut. We've also discovered that there are as many neurons (nerve cells) in the gut as there are in the spinal cord, and that the gut or digestive tract acts as a completely independent site of neural processing, leading it to now be coined our "second brain."

With this focus in mind, the last five years have given rise to a mountain of research that links dysbiosis (an imbalance of gut flora) with not only obesity, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, asthma and allergies, but also a host of mental and emotional disorders.

As scientists work to understand what offsets and depletes our foundation of health, many studies now also question the long-term impact that cesarean births and a lack of exclusive breastfeeding have on our developing microbiomes.

#### **How Can a C-Section Affect this Microbiome?**

Studies have shown that vaginal delivery exposes a baby to microbes that resemble the mother's vaginal bacteria (e.g., lactobacillus, prevotella and sneathia); in contrast, C-section exposes the baby to microbes that resemble those found on the skin (e.g., staphylococcus, corynebacterium and propionibacterium). It is suggested that children born by C-section lack the benefit of protective vaginal bacteria, which may make them more susceptible to viruses, allergies and asthma later in life.

It is suggested that by not passing through the birth canal a C-section-delivered baby's microbiome is not seeded in the same way it is with a vaginal birth. This deleterious effect is compounded further if the infant is not exclusively breastfed, as colostrum and breast milk help to further establish the diversity and richness of the microbiome.

Breastfeeding is often incredibly hard post C-section largely because both mothers and babies are drowsy from the medications used. Additionally, oxytocin, the hormone of love, does not act in the same way with a cesarean birth. Oxytocin is the initiator of the rhythmic contractions of early labor and it also mediates

the "milk-ejection reflex," which allows for successful breastfeeding and promotes the development of a strong bond between mother and baby. Typically with cesarean births it is some time before babies are placed with their mothers.

A recent meta-analysis of 20 studies worldwide reported that C-sections, independent of maternal age, birth weight and breastfeeding, contributed a 20 percent increase in the risk of type 1 diabetes. The journal *Diabetes* discusses how the development of type 1 diabetes may relate to the initial bacteria to which a baby is exposed, relating to the type of delivery and the development of a child's immune system and in modulating its response to external agents later in life.

Another complication of cesareans can be the lack of molding of the cranial (skull) bones. Molding is important in the activation of the respiratory centers of the brain as well as in the expulsion of air from the lungs.

Researchers at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology discovered that "a cesarean delivery may predispose an infant to atopic disease (allergies) and increased the risk of asthma."

Infants born by elective cesarean delivery have been shown to have even lower bacterial richness and diversity than babies born via cesarean and vaginal birth. Studies indicate that elective cesarean babies

are more likely to have breathing difficulties and increased risk of neonatal respiratory distress syndrome (RDS), a life-threatening condition, as well as other respiratory problems.

Clever obstetrics can indeed save the lives of women and babies in the event of an emergency, but it is the seemingly automatic classification of all labor as an emergency that is so concerning, leading to the increased medicalization of birth. Particularly alarming is the increase in cesarean, which is seen as a convenient and fast solution to many "problems," including the expected time frames of parents, hospitals and medical staff.

#### **The Spiraling Effect of an Epidural**

Some couples plan to use a little anesthesia or pain-relieving drugs at some point during their labor. In this case, they should be aware of the spiraling effects that generally follow once these drugs are administered, not only during the birth but over subsequent weeks and months.

Medical practitioners frequently recommend epidurals as a means of quick and effective pain relief.

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ONE QUICK DECISION FOR SHORT-TERM GAIN CAN HAVE COMPOUNDING EFFECTS ON THE HEALTH OF A NEWBORN INFANT, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT NEWBORN, AND OUR CAPACITY TO CONFIDENTLY BEGIN THE JOURNEY OF PARENTING.



Discussions with parents may include the information that epidurals can be used to lower blood pressure during labor and that the risk of spinal cord injury is significantly low. In general, this type of procedure is made to sound safe and easy.

But parents may not be aware of countless studies, including studies by the International Health Care Research Group at the Cochrane Institute, which have linked epidurals with longer labors and an increased risk of an instrumental delivery (using forceps and vacuum) or cesarean birth. Parents are also not aware that babies born via intervention methods are at greater risk of subtle birth trauma, which tend to result in difficulty with breastfeeding, irritable baby syndrome or colic.

The “fine print” associated with epidurals is that other forms of intervention—such as an oxytocin drip (to keep contractions going), an episiotomy, forceps, vacuum extraction or cesarean—are all likely birth outcomes. Once administered, pain relief is gained but the anesthetic also affects the muscles responsible for guiding the baby into the correct birthing position, greatly increasing the probability of further intervention.

There is also an increased likelihood that the mother’s temperature will rise the longer an epidural is in place, and if this happens the baby’s temperature will also rise, increasing the risks of fetal distress and the need for intervention. If the newborn maintains a temperature post-birth, pediatricians will forcibly administer the baby with antibiotics.

Antibiotics are very caustic to a newborn’s small, developing intestines, and studies show that the incomplete protein breakdown associated with colic can be caused by the use of antibiotics, administered either to the baby at birth, or to the mother during labor or pregnancy.

Furthermore, research suggests that epidurals given during childbirth can result in breastfeeding difficulties. No one yet knows whether these drugs can override the mother’s own hormonal capacity to produce milk, but results have shown that women who have an epidural are less likely to fully breastfeed their infants in the few days following birth and are more likely to stop breastfeeding in the first 24 weeks.

One quick decision for short-term gain can have compounding effects on the health of a newborn infant, our relationship with that newborn, and our capacity to confidently begin the journey of parenting.

**Investigating Your Birth Options**

Parenting for the first time requires patience and stamina; having to endure the toll of colic or irritable baby syndrome adds greatly to the burden, yet is not often considered when consenting to pain-relieving anesthesia in labor. Sometimes we make choices flippantly and dismiss the thought of a plausible effect.

Welcoming a child into the world can be one of life’s most enriching experiences and, like most events, requires careful planning and preparation. “Planning” involves knowing and understanding the impact of our consumer choice and helps to alleviate disappointment and lingering resentments but, most of all, allows us to learn about important topics like the human microbiome and how we can protect and preserve our child’s health.

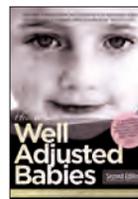
Fully investigating a procedure or product helps us to identify the risks involved and to ascertain what our needs may be. Keep in mind that there are alternative ways to ease the pain of labor without the use of drugs.

Our microbiome is essential to human health and it is paramount that we realize that. How we birth our babies and whether we choose to breastfeed them or not are now being shown to have lasting effects on our children’s health.

Chiropractic adjustments help mothers move toward straightforward, natural births, and adjustments for both mothers and newborns after the birth encourage effective and enjoyable breastfeeding. Fortunately, more and more parents understand the integral role chiropractic plays in a healthy pregnancy, natural birth, and in helping to preserve and protect our children. 🌱



*Dr. Jennifer Barham-Floreani, chiropractor and author, is a published authority on pediatric health and holistic parenting. The second edition of her book Well Adjusted Babies has been called “the new holistic bible for pregnancy, childbirth and beyond.”*



*Jennifer’s career has been dedicated to encouraging the “health literacy” of families and she has received many international awards for her three books. As a mother of four, Jennifer has become an authentic guide for couples and families; she shares clinical and personal experience, research and inspiration on her website, WellAdjusted.me, to help parents raise happy, healthy children. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*

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# “You’re Not Allowed to Not Allow Me.”

## Reclaiming the rights of mothers during birth

By Cristen Pascucci

**F**or most women, pregnancy and childbirth are one of the few times we let other adults tell us what we are “allowed” and “not allowed” to do with our own bodies. It’s time to change our language around this to reflect the legal and ethical reality that it is the patient who allows the provider to do something—not the other way around—and to eliminate a word that has no place between true partners in care.

We hear the word “allow” used regularly, by well-meaning care providers and family members, and by pregnant women themselves. During my own pregnancy, I was told I “may or may not be allowed” to hold my baby immediately after he was born, depending on which hospital staff was on shift. It struck me as so odd that I might be in the position of asking to hold my own precious baby, especially when I’d chosen to hire these care providers. Who was allowing whom here?

Most recently, it has been all over the media following the March 2014 release of guidelines for lowering the primary cesarean rate from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. Here’s what they said on NPR: “Women with low-risk pregnancies should be allowed to spend more time in labor, to reduce the risk of having an unnecessary C-section, the nation’s obstetricians say.” And on *CBS News Philadelphia*, a spokesperson said this: “That may mean that we allow a patient to labor longer, to push for a longer amount of time, and to allow patients to take more time through the natural process.”

For women giving birth in the American maternity system, these guidelines are welcome, but they are no magic bullet. Medical practices take years and even decades to change, and while that happens, what assurances do women have about the care they are receiving today? Is it ethical to hold women to what an individual provider will “allow,” with the full knowledge that not all providers are practicing to the standards science shows are best for moms and babies?

These are not rhetorical questions. In the United States, outdated, non-evidence-based practice is routine and accepted; cesarean section rates vary tenfold among U.S. hospitals; and those rates vary fifteenfold among the low-risk population. More than 40 percent of hospitals defy national health policy by “not allowing” vaginal birth after cesarean, to the detriment of hundreds of thousands of mothers and babies. The U.S. is the only developed country in the world with a rising maternal mortality rate. One factor in that rise is our overuse of surgery for childbirth. We simply cannot operate on the assumption that the surgeries women are receiving are always in their best interests, or that of their babies.

But it’s about more than just a stand-alone decision around whether to do a cesarean. There’s a sequence of events leading up to that possibility, and many women have been relieved of their decision-making power well before that time. When women have been given messages all along that they are not the authority in their own childbirth, it’s easy for a care provider to make a unilateral decision about surgery. What woman who has experienced nine months of language like “we can’t let you” and “you’re not allowed” is going to suddenly have the wherewithal to refuse an unnecessary surgery—or to even know she has the right to do so?

The truth is that women, like all U.S. citizens, have the right to make decisions about their bodies based on informed consent—a legal, ethical standard which requires the provider to convey all of the information around a suggested procedure or course of treatment, and the person receiving the treatment gets to decide whether or not to take that advice. ACOG states clearly about informed consent in maternity care: “The freedom to accept or refuse recommended medical treatment has legal as well as ethical foundations.... In the obstetric setting, recognize that a competent pregnant woman is the appropriate decision maker for the fetus that she is carrying.”

This stands in stark contrast to women being told they are “not allowed” to decline potentially harmful

AT ITS HEART, THIS LANGUAGE IS ABOUT A LACK OF RESPECT. IT'S A SLOPPY WAY OF SKIPPING MEANINGFUL AND NECESSARY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE A COMMON GOAL FOR BOTH MOTHER AND PROVIDER: A HEALTHY, HAPPY BIRTH.



interventions like continuous electronic monitoring in a low-risk pregnancy, or to make an informed decision for a vaginal birth rather than a surgical one—or even to eat, drink or go to the bathroom during labor.

At its heart, this language is about a lack of respect. It's a sloppy way of skipping meaningful and necessary conversations about what should be a common goal for both mother and provider: a healthy, happy birth.

It's also a reinforcement of deep cultural beliefs about women as passive objects, not full owners of their bodies nor representatives of their babies, and having lesser decision-making capacity than those they've hired to support them. These ideas will take time to change. But birth is a great place to start.

Words have power, and we can take back that power in some simple ways:

- **Don't stay silent when you hear this kind of language in casual conversation.** Say something—even if it's just a little something. Don't let it go unnoticed.
- **Be gentle while you are being firm.** Remember that most people are just repeating something common and accepted, and they probably haven't thought much about it. Make it your goal to inform, not convince.
- **Choose to give your business to providers who use respectful language.** If you're hearing this language during pregnancy, you can be pretty sure you're going to hear it during childbirth—and that can be a problem. You can't act like a mother when you're being treated like a child.

- **Partners, stand up for your loved ones.** When she is vulnerable, be her voice. There is no one better positioned to be a vocal advocate for her and her baby.

Today, American women are gambling with their bodies when they give birth, with a one-in-three average cesarean rate in facilities where practices vary widely, even among individual providers. We are tying women's hands when we continue to reinforce this dysfunction by using words like “allow” to describe an outdated dynamic that doesn't recognize us as competent, rights-bearing adults.

The legal authority in childbirth lies with the woman giving birth, not the providers of care. Yes, they are a team, but of the two, it is the woman who truly bears the rights and the risks of childbirth. Our words should reflect that reality. 📌



*Cristen Pascucci is an advocate for mothers, vice president of ImprovingBirth.org, founder of Birth Monopoly, and the U.S. consumer representative to Human Rights in Childbirth. She works closely with leading national advocates, organizations and birth lawyers to promote safer, more respectful treatment of women and babies in childbirth. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](https://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*

# The Health Benefits of FINDING YOUR TRIBE

By Lissa Rankin, M.D.

**M**ost of us have been blessed to get at least glimpses into what it feels like to be part of a tribe. Maybe you felt that sense of belonging on your wedding day, when family and friends gathered from afar just to celebrate your awesomeness. Maybe your team won the championship and you all hugged and cried and bonded over team jerseys and mascots.

Maybe that sense of belonging washed over you when you threw your cap into the air on graduation day. Maybe you've felt it in church or in your women's or men's group or in yoga class or at a personal growth workshop. Maybe you've felt it on girl's night out or when you rushed a fraternity or when you got crowned with your tiara in Mama Gena's School of Womanly Arts.

Every single one of us craves the feeling of being part of something bigger than ourselves. By nature, we are tribal, and back in our caveman days, tribal culture was necessary for survival. But increasingly, we have become disconnected from our tribe. We know our people are out there—somewhere, anywhere—but we feel lost and disconnected from them. We seek them, but they keep eluding us. Without our tribe, we may wind up feeling distanced, depressed, spiritually disconnected, even sick.

## The Power of the Clan

The people of Roseto, Pennsylvania, knew this well. Back in the 1960s, if you had wandered upon the small town of Italian immigrants, you would have seen people returning from work at the end of the day, strolling along the village's main street, stopping to gossip with the neighbors, and maybe sharing a glass of wine before heading home to change into dinner clothes.

You'd see women gathering together in communal kitchens, preparing classic Italian feasts, while men pushed tables together in anticipation of the nightly

ritual that gathered the community together over heaping piles of pasta, Italian sausage, meatballs fried in lard, and free-flowing vino.

As a community of new immigrants surrounded by English and Welsh neighbors who turned up their noses at the Italians, the people of Roseto had to look out for each other. Multi-generational homes were the norm. During the week, everyone went to the same workplace, and on Sundays, everyone went to church together. Neighbors wandered in and out of each other's kitchens regularly, and holidays were joyously celebrated communally.

The people of Roseto took care of each other. Nobody in Roseto was left to struggle through life alone. Roseto was living proof of the power of the clan. And while they smoked, drank booze every night, and ate junk food, the people of Roseto had half the risk of heart attack deaths as the rest of the country. Not because of genetics, better doctors, or something in their water supply. Researchers ultimately concluded that love, intimacy and being part of a tribe protected their health.

John Bruhn, a sociologist, recalls, "There was no suicide, no alcoholism, no drug addiction, and very little crime. They didn't have anyone on welfare. Then we looked at peptic ulcers. They didn't have any of those, either. These people were dying of old age. That's it."

## Then Everything Changed...

As time went on, the younger generation wasn't so thrilled about life in Roseto, which to them seemed immune to modernization. When the young people went off to study at college, they brought back to Roseto new ideas, new dreams and new people. Italian-Americans started marrying non-Italians. The children strayed from the church, joined country clubs, and moved into single-family suburban houses with fences and pools.

## HAVE YOU FOUND YOUR TRIBE?

Lissa Rankin invites us: "If you're feeling lonely or sick and reading this just depresses you, please don't despair. I know your people are out there, just yearning to find you. We all belong somewhere, and it's just a matter of calling in your people. You can read '7 Tips For Finding Your Tribe,' that I wrote for [Wakeup-world.com](http://Wakeup-world.com), for guidance on how to attract the authentic community that lights your fire. Or, if the idea of gathering in an online community with others committed to lighting up each other's Inner Pilot Lights resonates with you, I officially invite you to join me and a community of bright, sparkly souls at [lissarankin.com](http://lissarankin.com)." We at PATHWAYS want to remind you that our Pathways Connect groups are another option to fulfill this need. Find your local group on our website.



NOT ONLY IS IT HUMAN NATURE TO CRAVE INTIMACY AND BELONGING;  
IT'S ALSO ESSENTIAL PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE.

With these changes, the multi-generational homes disbanded and the community lifestyle shifted gears from nightly celebrations to more of the typical “every man for himself” philosophy that fueled the neighboring communities. The neighbors who would regularly drop in for casual visits started phoning each other to schedule appointments. The evening rituals of adults singing songs while children played with marbles and jacks turned into nights in front of the television.

In 1971, when heart attack rates in other parts of the country were dropping because of widespread adoption of healthier diets and regular exercise programs, Roseto had its first heart attack death in someone younger than 45. Over the next decade, heart disease rates in Roseto doubled. The incidence of high blood pressure tripled. And the number of strokes increased. Sadly, by the end of the 1970s, the number of fatal heart attacks in Roseto had increased to the national average.

As it turns out, human beings nourish each other even more than spaghetti does, and the health of the body reflects this.

### Intimacy Is Preventative Medicine

Not only is it human nature to crave intimacy and belonging; it's also essential preventative medicine. As I write about in my book *Mind Over Medicine*, copious scientific data proves that loneliness is a greater risk to your health than smoking or lack of exercise, and finding your tribe is better than any vitamin, diet or exercise regimen.

One study examining the people of Alameda County, California, found that people with the most social ties were three times less likely to have died over a nine-year period than those who reported the fewest social ties. Those with more social connections were even found to have lower rates of cancer.

In fact, a Harvard study examining the lives of almost 3,000 people found that those who gather together to go out to dinner, play cards, go on day trips, vacation with friends, go to the movies, attend sporting events, go to church, and engage in other social activities outlive their reclusive peers by an average of two and a half years. Finding your tribe is not only fun. It can also save your life. 



Lissa Rankin, M.D., New York Times–bestselling author of *Mind Over Medicine* and *The Fear Cure*, is a physician, speaker, founder of the Whole Health Medicine Institute, and spiritual seeker. Passionate about what makes people optimally healthy and what predisposes them to illness, she is on a mission to merge science and spirituality in a way that not only facilitates the health of the individual, but also heals the collective. Lissa has starred in two PBS specials and also leads spirituality workshops, both online and at retreat centers across the country. When doing what she can to sprinkle pixie dust on a fear-based culture, Lissa loves to hike, ski and dance. She lives in the San Francisco Bay area with her daughter. Read her blog and learn more at [LissaRankin.com](http://LissaRankin.com). View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).

# Free the Children

By Charles Eisenstein

I've been seeing a lot of news articles recently about parents being arrested and their children removed from their custody because they let them play unsupervised outdoors. The first thing I felt upon reading these stories was intense indignation, followed by alienation from a society in which such a thing is remotely conceivable.

Why is this happening? Why has there been this tremendous change from my own childhood, in which it was normal for us to wander far and wide, unsupervised, as young as 6 or 7?

There are a few reasons. First, the decline of community. During my childhood, all the neighbors knew each other and would keep an eye on each other's kids. The boundary between home and not-home was more fluid, more gradual. The neighbor's yard or the cornfield at the end of the street was still home territory.

Related to that, when people are tied together in a community they are not so prone to call upon remote authorities such as Child Protective Services or the police. They go to each other first, using informal means of negotiating social disputes, enforcing norms, and taking care of each other.

Also, our society has become habituated to control, and uncomfortable with uncertainty and the indefinite. A child, accordingly, must be under someone's official supervision at all times. Whether it is the bus driver, the school, the daycare worker or the camp counselor, someone must always be *in loco parentis*. Someone must always be in control. The child must always be accounted for. There is no room for the liminal space, the exploratory zone, the adventure, the unknown. The same mindset also manifests in the expansion of legal liability into every aspect of public life. In a world under control, if something bad happens, it must be someone's fault.

Finally, safety has become a top priority in our society—more important than freedom, more important than fun. Writ large, that priority informs the National Security state. Why should safety be our number-one priority? Who puts self-preservation above anything else? A person disconnected from life's purpose,



OUR SOCIETY HAS BECOME HABITUATED TO CONTROL, AND UNCOMFORTABLE WITH UNCERTAINTY AND THE INDEFINITE. A CHILD, ACCORDINGLY, MUST BE UNDER SOMEONE'S OFFICIAL SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES.

disconnected from service, and disconnected from the creative impulse, that's who. Our economic system, educational system, and metaphysics all promote that disconnection. The dominant teaching of both economics and evolutionary biology is that all beings are driven to maximize their self-interest (in economics, financial self-interest; in biology, reproductive self-interest).

Unfortunately, without an element of danger or uncertainty there is no such thing as an adventure, and therefore no opportunity for children to explore their boundaries, develop self-confidence, and become comfortable with uncertainty. Constant supervision is harmful for a child's development, because it signals to them: "You are not worthy of trust." No wonder our children enact untrustworthiness when they become teens.

When real adventure has been cut off, what is left? Fake adventures, in the form of video games and virtual realities online. These are consequence-free zones in which nothing really bad can happen, and nothing you do really matters. In raising my own children I've done my best to limit screen time and make them go outdoors—no easy task when most of the other kids are safely parked in front of their screens. And, it turns out, a terribly risky proposition. I'm not so afraid of kidnapping, drowning or any of the other terrible things that truly could happen to my unsupervised children. And they *could* happen. Life isn't safe. What I have been afraid of is having my children taken away because I let them enjoy some unsupervised play, which is what happened to an 11-year-old boy in Florida.

It's time to reclaim the kingdom of childhood. For me, personally, I'm seeking to move with my family to a place more aligned with my parenting values. But ultimately we need a shift in values everywhere.

I recently had an opportunity to speak at Lebensgarten, an ecovillage in Steyersberg, Germany. This is one of the

earliest centers of the modern permaculture movement, but what impressed me the most were the children I saw playing, unsupervised, outside. I suppose this shouldn't be that impressive—after all, in traditional contexts unsupervised play is the norm.

In the United States, though, huge social (and even legal) pressure demands that children be constantly supervised. I keep reading news stories of parents who are arrested for child endangerment because their children went to the playground themselves, got on a bus themselves, etc. Sometimes it seems that mere supervision isn't enough. Our 2-year-old, Cary, plays on a jungle gym without any hovering hands ready to catch him—which sometimes seems to upset other parents at the playground.

We hope to instill in Cary the self-confidence that comes when his parents judge him capable of making decisions and recognizing risks. We also think it important that he be allowed to make mistakes and feel their natural consequences. Overprotected children learn that the only consequences to be feared are those imposed by authority (i.e., getting in trouble). That works for a while, until they become teenagers and realize that parental consequences are easily avoided (by deceiving their parents). Then, having internalized the idea that these are the only consequences to be feared, they act as if nothing they do could have any consequences. Overprotection gives birth to recklessness.

I suppose it might be imprudent to say this to all of this magazine's readership, but I often encourage my 10-year-old son, Philip, to roam with his friends through the neighborhood (and I have for several years). This was entirely normal when I was a child; we'd wander for miles. That today this is considered a crime bespeaks the rising tide of fear that grips my country. "Safety first," the



## IS SAFETY OUR HIGHEST VALUE? IS IT UNQUESTIONABLE THAT SAFETY SHOULD TRUMP FREEDOM, FUN OR ADVENTURE?

saying goes. Really, though? Is that our highest value? Is it unquestionable that safety should trump freedom, fun or adventure?

Yes, Cary could quite easily fall off the jungle gym and suffer permanent injury. Philip could get hurt, molested, or kidnapped. Such things happen. The world is not safe. It would be much safer to keep them inside all the time, living a virtual life in front of screens. These screens provide the substitute adventures children crave when the real thing is unavailable.

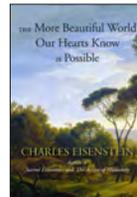
Herein lies yet another form of insidious programming: to abide in a virtual world where the consequences of our actions are virtual as well. How convenient for the status quo if our resistance is safely contained in the Internet—if we are conditioned to think the 3-D public space is off-limits except with the permission and supervision of authority. We feel, then, that it is not our space. That is why I thought the basic meme of Occupy was so significant a few years ago: It challenged a very deep programming.

The mantra “safety first” reflects a society that is addicted to control and bereft of its sense of purpose. Transposed onto politics, it appears as the security state enslaved to an irrational and hyperbolic fear of terrorism, and a compulsion to “supervise” the world through electronic surveillance.

On any level, from the personal to the political, the fixation on safety makes sense only in disconnection

from purpose. A person in touch with her purpose puts her gifts in service to that, and doesn’t act as if the most important thing in life were merely to survive. In the same vein, a nation in service to the planet will not be fixated on national security.

The playgrounds I often see in my country, with their hovering parents, make me nostalgic for the lost scenes of my childhood: boys and girls playing jump rope or cops-and-robbers, riding bikes far and wide. It feels gratifying to see these scenes reenacted at a place like Lebensgarten. It reminds me that I am not crazy for wanting to raise my children in trust. ☺



*Charles Eisenstein is a speaker and writer focusing on themes of human culture and identity. He is the author of several books, most recently Sacred Economics and The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible. His background includes a degree in mathematics and philosophy from Yale, a decade in Taiwan as a translator, and stints as a college instructor, a yoga teacher, and a construction worker. He currently writes and speaks full-time. He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and four children. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*



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# Raising Awake Children in a Broken School System

By Nanice Ellis

**T**raditional schools in the United States and many other countries are training grounds, intentionally constructed to prepare children for the System. Public and many private schools are designed to program children to be asleep, and stay asleep, so that they will later follow along as adults. Our innocent kids are systematically programmed with worthiness issues, depression and the abhorrent need to fit in. Once a child is programmed for 12 or more years, he or she is well primed to move into the “real world” with beliefs and behaviors that feed and perpetuate a systematic agenda.

Schools are structured so that rewards are given for following along, being good, doing as you are told, memorization and repetition. Punishment is given for speaking out, thinking for yourself and not following along. Schools effectively teach students to feel powerless and to question their worth at every turn, breaking the precious spirits of our impressionable children.

In many ways, schools use a military template in order to roll out obedient citizens: They utilize long, structured hours, endless homework, tests that create anxiety, and ceaseless memorization, with little time for recess. Keeping children sitting at desks all day also disconnects them from their bodies and the wisdom that is in the body. Many schools even look and feel like depressing military barracks.

When I was a kid, I would sleepwalk as a result of PTSD from school stress. Years later, I would still have nightmares that I failed a test. I would wake up sweating, needing to remind myself that school was over. There is even more school stress these days than when I was a kid.

It is not uncommon for preteens to be on Prozac or other depression/anxiety medication because they are

overwhelmed, anxious or depressed. An 11-year-old should not even know stress! Kids should be free to create and express, to enjoy life, and especially to delight in learning. No wonder the teenage suicide rate continues to increase.

## **Medicating Our Young to Stay Asleep?**

Of course, there are children who don't respond to school programming and do not go along with the agenda. These children are diagnosed with ADHD or ADD, but what we are calling a disability or a problem is actually natural creativity—energy that has no positive

channel for expression in a school environment. Schools cannot handle normally evolving children, so these children are labeled and diagnosed in order to have an excuse to medicate...and sometimes separate.

But that is only part of this problem. The real problem is that in order to appease teachers and

school officials, many parents agree to medicate their children. Giving our kids dangerous drugs to stay asleep is like forcing them to take the blue pill in the Matrix. These children are asking us to evolve and we are responding to them with sedation.

## **The Death of Imagination**

Our greatest power to consciously create rests in the “mental technology” known as imagination. Everything begins with imagination. It is stronger and more powerful than any action that we take in the world. Isn't it interesting that traditional schools shut down imagination?

If you cut off a child from his imagination, you have cut him off from his power to consciously create his life. The System does not support imagination because it needs people to follow along and do what they are told in order to feed and sustain it. If everyone used their imagination

**KIDS SHOULD BE  
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and thought for themselves, most dysfunctional systems would break down very quickly.

To the System, a child's imagination is the enemy, and therefore must be suppressed at any cost.

Unknowingly, we, as parents, do the same to our children. It was done to us, and we have been brainwashed to believe that children must let go of their imaginative powers in order to succeed in life—or, rather, to succeed in the System. When we are awake, we can easily see that true success comes from the power of one's imagination and the freedom to express it—ultimately manifesting in tangible results.

Let me be clear: There are some schools that support and encourage the free and natural development of children, but the schools to which I am referring are established, and run, by government institutions that are invested in keeping future generations in line and asleep.

### **Higher Learning**

Education is essential, but there is a huge difference between memorizing information that you will never use and being able to learn something because it will positively impact your life, or open your mind in some expansive manner, allowing you to create and contribute to humanity.

There is so much to learn in this world, but traditional schools don't address the most important elements of life, like communication skills, relationship skills, growing food, building homes, nutrition, natural healing, and so on. If schools taught our children to be self-sufficient, confident and well-equipped for real life, the System would crash, or at the very least dissolve naturally over time.

### **Why don't we tell our children the truth about the System as soon as they are old enough to understand?**

Regrettably, I was not awake enough to tell my young children about the game that we are all playing, and that their participation was optional. Fortunately, my kids woke up, and after years in the traditional school system, they each independently saw through the holes in it, and left before they could be rewarded with completion. I'm the proud parent of three brilliant and awake high-school dropouts. Luckily, by the time they had the



wisdom to make their own choices, I had the courage to support them.

We are waking up—but if we are still raising children in an antiquated school system, then we are just passing along the hypnotic trance to the next generation. I want to be clear: There are excellent and well-intentioned teachers, but they too are restricted, and too pressured in many of the same ways that distress our children.

### **What can you do if your child is in the System?**

I am certainly not saying that we should take our children out of schools or not put them there to begin with. I am saying that if we must send our kids to traditional schools, at the very least we should tell them the truth in a way that is empowering and freeing. We should not allow the System to raise our precious children for us.

If your child is in the traditional school system, it is imperative that you be a strong parent and resist the pressure of teachers and school officials who try to tell you how to parent.

- Take back your power as a parent.
- Take a stand for your children.
- Stop caring what others say about you or your children.
- Don't be bullied by school authority figures who want you to bully your own children.
- Support your children in thinking for themselves.
- Overcome your own fears of breaking free.
- Find other parents who think like you.
- Form support groups for parents, and for the children.



THERE IS SO MUCH TO LEARN IN THIS WORLD, BUT TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS DON'T ADDRESS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF LIFE.

### Creating Better Lives for Our Children

Instead of teaching children how to get along in a dysfunctional world, why don't we teach our kids how to create their lives based on their highest values? Whether you are a parent or a school teacher, you have the power and ability to teach children to:

- Trust inner guidance.
- Make positive choices.
- Use their imagination.
- Be able to say no and set boundaries.
- Think for themselves.
- Experience inner power.
- Develop intuition.
- Acquire skills for self-learning.
- Gain high self-esteem.
- Express inner confidence.
- Master communication skills.
- Experience and process emotions in healthy ways.

This might mean that you must first embrace these things for yourself so that you can teach your kids, but that is also the point.

Whenever I've taken a stand for my children, each time the school initially fought back but ultimately backed off. I watched the school system (and a conventional ex-husband) bend in surprising ways to support each of my children.

It is important to acknowledge the restrictions placed on your child's teachers, but this doesn't mean that you should take no for an answer. Your child's teachers can be your best allies in creating a superior school experience. And don't be afraid to kindly and respectfully educate

your child's teachers to a more enlightened approach to teaching. We are all learning and waking up together.

Most of all, trust yourself as a parent, and don't be afraid to go against the grain in support of your children.

My three children have excelled in extraordinary ways—for example, when my son, Travis, broke free of the school system at 16, he took all that “military time” he would have spent in traditional school and he used it every day studying things that he was truly interested in. In under two years, he mastered a musical instrument, taught himself how to draw portraits, developed communication skills, become an expert in body building and he even started his own business at the age of 17. If he had followed along like society demanded, right now he would be scratching his head and moving into the next phase of an inauthentic life. 🌀



Nanice Ellis has practiced “Manifestation Life Coaching” for almost 20 years, and is the author of seven inspirational books. She is a teacher of empowered spirituality, as well as a neuro-linguistic practitioner and theta healer. As the mother of three grown boys, she also teaches, coaches and writes about conscious parenting. Her books include *Even Gandhi Got Hungry* and *Buddha Got Mad!* and *I Am*. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).

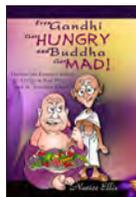




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# Children Who Shine from Within

By Rachel Macy Stafford

What's your favorite insect?" my 7-year-old daughter asked as we took an evening walk on the first night of her spring vacation. Before I had a chance to respond, she added, "You can't pick butterfly. Everyone picks the butterfly."

"Hmmm," I thought out loud. "I guess mine would have to be a ladybug," I finally answered.

"Mine's a firefly. I love the firefly," she said wistfully.

We kept walking. Talking. Enjoying the rare treat of alone time—just my younger daughter and me.

And then:

"Am I okay? I mean, am I fine?" she asked, looking down at herself. "Sometimes I feel different."

I immediately stopped walking and searched her face. Without saying what she meant, I knew; I just knew.

I bent down and spoke from a painful memory tucked away since second grade. "When I was your age, I felt different, too. I felt uncomfortable, self-conscious. One boy said really cruel things about the way I looked. He said I didn't belong. His words hurt me for a long, long time," I admitted.

As she looked at me sadly, her previous words echoed in my head. *Everyone picks the butterfly.*

I placed my hands on her sturdy little shoulders as if somehow this could make her feel my words right down to the bone. "I want you to know something. You can

always talk to me when you feel different or uncomfortable. I will never laugh. I will never judge you or tell you it's no big deal. I will never brush away your feelings, because I understand. I remember how it hurts. And sometimes you just need someone to understand that hurt."

"You mentioned that you love the firefly," I reminded her. "Well, I think you're a lot like a firefly. You know why?" I asked.

The worry on her face lifted. She looked at me hopefully. "Why, Mama?"

"Because you shine from within," I said touching my finger to her heart. "Not everybody sees it, but I do. I see it. And my job is to protect that light. So when people say mean comments that squelch that light, I want you to tell me. I will protect your light by listening and loving you, my brave, courageous, unique little firefly."

My daughter stepped forward and wrapped her arms around my neck. She still said nothing—not one word. Maybe it was because she was on the verge of tears. Maybe it was because silent comfort was all she needed in that moment. I can't be sure. But what I can be sure of is this: This story is not over.

You see, as weeks have passed, I haven't been able to stop thinking of our firefly talk and the timing of this message. The end of the school year can be hard for kids, especially the fireflies—those who shine from within.

## Soul-Building Words for the Ones You Love

When they need to know how much you love them:

- *You make my day better.*
- *You make my life better.*
- *I love spending time with you.*
- *Seeing your face makes me happy.*

When they need to know you are all there:

- *I'm listening.*
- *My time is all yours.*
- *How can I be a better parent/friend/spouse to you?*
- *Nothing is more important than being with you right now.*

When they are stressed or frustrated:

- *How can I help?*
- *Take your time. You don't have to rush.*
- *I think you're doing a tremendous job.*
- *Keep going. You've got this.*

When they experience failure:

- *Be kind to yourself. You're doing the best you can.*
- *Mistakes mean you are bravely learning and growing.*
- *It may not be the outcome you hoped for, but I noticed your effort and it was quite remarkable.*
- *I believe in you.*

When they face a challenge:

- *I am amazed at how much you're handling right now.*
- *I am learning a lot from you by watching you do something so challenging.*
- *This isn't over—there's still time to turn this around.*
- *You are not alone.*



THE BUTTERFLIES WILL BE NOTICED. SO BRILLIANT. SO COLORFUL. THEIR TALENTS SO OBVIOUS. BUT LET US NOT FORGET THE FIREFLIES. THEIR TRIUMPHS ARE QUIET AND UNSUSPECTING.

It's that time—time for awards, banquets, recognition and applause. The butterflies will be noticed. So brilliant. So colorful. Their talents so obvious. But let us not forget the fireflies. Their triumphs are quiet and unsuspecting. Their gifts might even go completely unnoticed.

A firefly might be a seat saver on the bus, so someone doesn't have to go to the intimidating back row. A firefly might be a songwriter who pens music in her nightly dreams and hums away her days. A firefly might be an artist that creates pictures you can feel with your soul. A firefly might save his money for years, just waiting for his heart to tell him, "That's the one who needs your help."

A firefly might stay up past bedtime calculating numbers beneath the covers because he was born a mathematician. A firefly might be the I.T. kid of the school, who jumps at the chance to help teachers with their computer woes. A firefly might get lost in a cloud of flour, delighting in culinary arts.

A firefly might be a horseback rider, finding peace in the company of animals and nature. A firefly might devour a 357-page book in one sitting. A firefly might have eyes for the lonely, looking for someone who wonders if she's invisible. A firefly might stick up for the lost, the rejected, the alone. A firefly might be the lost, the rejected, the alone...just waiting for someone to notice his light among all the bright, fluttering wings of the butterflies.

Maybe you know a firefly. Maybe you love a firefly.

If you do, please don't wait. Don't wait for someone to hand him an award or a give her a certificate to make their talents and gifts "official." That day may never come. So say it now. Say this:



*I see your light.  
I see it when you pick up your guitar.  
I see it when you make brushstrokes  
of yellow, green and gold.  
I see it when you sing with your eyes closed.  
I see it when you laugh with your mouth open wide.  
I see it when you stand along the water's edge,  
dreaming of your future.  
I see your light, my brave and courageous firefly.  
You shine from within.  
And regardless if anyone else sees it or not—  
you know it's there, and I know it's there.  
So keep shining.  
Keep singing.  
Keep creating.  
Keep dreaming.  
Keeping caring.  
Keep adding, subtracting and multiplying.  
Keep making your magic.  
And just you wait.  
Someday the world is going to see what I see.*

*And your light will be so beautiful, so brilliant,  
and so bright that the world is going to  
stop and wonder where such a light comes from.  
And you and I will both know that light,  
well, it's been there all along.  
Because you are a firefly.  
You shine from within.  
And I am here to protect that light, my brave and  
courageous firefly. 📌*



Rachel Macy Stafford is a certified special education teacher and New York Times bestselling author of *Hands Free Mama*. Through truthful storytelling and simple strategies, Rachel helps people overcome distraction and perfection to live better and love more at [handsfreemama.com](http://handsfreemama.com). Rachel's work has been featured on CNN, Good Morning America, Global News, *TIME.com*, and *The Huffington Post*. Rachel loves being outdoors, baking and doing acts of kindness with her husband and two daughters, who inspire her daily. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).

# WAITING FOR THE BIG ONE

By Charles Eisenstein

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hen I was 14 years old I embarked upon a reading program that included *The Gulag Archipelago*, *A People's History of the United States, 1984*, *Silent Spring*, and a volume by

Paul Ehrlich titled *The Population Bomb*. The latter was a Malthusian work predicting mass starvation in the 1980s unless impossibly drastic measures were adopted. Essentially, it predicted the end of the world as we know it. And after reading those other books, some part of me secretly hoped it were true.

Skip ahead a couple decades to the late '90s. The world hadn't ended yet, but there was still Y2K. The power grid and all that depends on it was going to come down on January 1, 2000.

Well, that date came and went too. Fortunately, new world-ending calamities continue to offer themselves: Peak Oil, for example, or a financial meltdown, or the collapse of the global conveyor belt system of ocean currents. People become obsessed with one or another of these potential crises and when it doesn't come they feel somehow disappointed or even betrayed.

So why this longing for "the Big One"? Why evince such unmistakable relish for Peak Oil or financial collapse? A large part is the desire for a wake-up call that will shock people out of their complacency so they would see the error of their ways and devote themselves to the healing of the planet. Wouldn't we abandon our consumerism, our militarism, or whatever other foolishness after such an event? Wouldn't that shock be the long-awaited queue to transform the medical system, the educational system, the agricultural system, the political system, the economic system?

The longing for the Big One is a longing for transcendence. It comes from dissatisfaction with the less beautiful world that we have come to accept as normal. It intuits that life can be made far more magnificent through a transformation so fundamental as to remake the world itself. This longing is also our death wish. It will underlie the emergence of that great archetype called Revolution which seeks nothing less than the death of our old paradigm and the building of a civilization atop the shoulders of our own self-development.

It is abundantly obvious that we are headed toward this. The death of politics, finance, energy, education, healthcare and the ecosystem are nearing their course. Every year I wonder whether this might be the last

"normal" year of our era and I despair, knowing that our best efforts to avert it are dwarfed by the forces driving us toward catastrophe.

But then I remember: On the other side of that despair rests this practical optimism. It says that this is not the end of the world. That it is only the end of the world as we know it. And that we are bound to a new kind of human beingness. But this optimism is not meant to hide the ugly facts of our world. Please do not think that optimism can only exist by denial of the true dimensions of the crisis.

I am fully aware of Peak Oil and our economic dependency on fossil fuels.

I am also aware of the impending health crisis: the epidemic rise of autoimmune diseases and the effect of heavy-metal, electromagnetic and chemical poisoning.

I am aware of the modern diet, the toxicity of pharmaceutical drugs, and the suppression of alternative therapies.

I have observed our schools turn into prisons, complete in some cases with barbed-wire barricades, metal detectors and chemical control over those who will not submit. I know of parents threatened with legal action for failing to medicate their children.

I am aware of the global financial Ponzi scheme, the political trend toward fascism, and the ubiquitous propaganda machine that's so successful even its operators are unconscious that they are legitimizing a global power elite.

And I am aware that we can't cleanse the system by removing a few bad apples—every important institution is complicit in this plunder.

It is not my purpose to persuade you that we indeed face a multitude of crises. Others have done so far more compellingly. Nor is it my aim to inspire you with hope that they may be averted. They cannot be, because the things that must happen to avert them will only happen as their consequence.

The foregoing doom-and-gloom scenario might seem familiar in tone if not in details, but consider that it may be not just The End but a Beginning as well—a birthing crisis that will propel us into a new age based on a different sense of self.

My optimism, then, is based on knowing that as our sense of self changes, the definition of "practical" and "possible" can and will change when we collectively hit bottom. When the above-mentioned crises converge, when we experience acutely and undeniably that the situation is out of control, when the failure of the old



regime is utterly transparent, then solutions that appear hopelessly radical today will become matters of common sense.

Despite the inevitability of our gathering crises, the seemingly futile efforts of generations of activists to avert it are extremely important. If you are such a person, facing down despair to tackle impossibly huge problems, take heart that your work is not in vain. While it is true that no effort at renewable energy, wastewater recycling, local currency, wetlands preservation, or reform of any aspect of society is going to avert catastrophe, these efforts are sowing seeds for the planetary renewal.

**U**nderstand that security comes only through giving, opening, and being in a flux of relationships, not by taking more for self. True independence will come from *interdependence* and the survivors will not be those who try to insulate themselves in a fortress, but who are able to give, to help, and to contribute to a community. They will form the basis of a new kind of civilization.

All the technical solutions for living sustainably and harmoniously exist already, and indeed always have existed. What is required is a shift in consciousness to a conception of ourselves as individuals capable of reversing the widening separation and deepening misery of the past millennia.

The shift in consciousness I speak of is not predicated upon any sort of technological invention or regression. It will happen and evoke vast technological consequences that will proceed as a matter of course. Visionary people are pioneering these material and social technologies today in

IT IS MY PURPOSE, DEAR READER, TO GIVE VOICE TO YOUR INDIGNATION AND TO REAFFIRM YOUR INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE THAT LIFE IS MEANT TO BE MORE.

response to the increasing futility of the old modes of management and control. That their inventions are not adopted on a wide scale simply means that the requisite shift in consciousness has yet to manifest.

The mechanisms by which society suppresses these inventions all rest on the same delusion; that we are discrete and separate selves living in an objective universe of Other. This delusion manifests: 1) in economics as the externalization of costs; 2) in science as barriers to the acceptance of new understanding; 3) in medicine as the us-versus-them mentality that classifies other modalities as unscientific, 4) in politics, law and education as control.

The fact that the regime of separation appears to be reaching new heights does not mean that prospects for a more beautiful world are receding into the distance. Rather, like a wave rolling toward shore, the Age of Separation rears up to its maximum height even as it hollows out in the moment before it crashes. This crash is the inevitable culmination of the separation that began in the deep past from the very moment we began to see ourselves as apart from nature. Throughout history perceptive individuals have seen the writing on the wall. Long ago they saw the first stirrings of a gathering calamity written into who we are, and they couched their insights in the language of myth and metaphor.

For thousands of years people have been predicting the end of the world. The basic psychic energy behind these predictions comes from a real source. They are tapping into a true insight: The edifice of civilization has an irremediable structural flaw that dictates its eventual collapse. We are on a collision course with nature and with human nature.

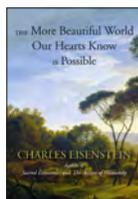
For many people, the convergence of crises has already happened. The end of the old civilization manifested subjectively in their own lifetimes as they dropped out of the matrix. Some are still living today in the interstitial spaces of our society, nearly invisible, and neither money nor laws nor war is part of their experience. In various ways, they withdrew from the apparatus of the Machine.

When crises converge, life as usual no longer makes sense, opening the way for a rebirth, a spiritual transformation. Mystics throughout the ages have recognized that heaven is not some distant, separate realm located at the end of life, but rather is available always, interpenetrating ordinary existence. As Jesus said, “The

Kingdom of the Father is in us and among us.” What is special about our age is that the fulfillment of processes of separation on the collective level are causing this personal convergence of crises and the subsequent awakening to a new sense of self.

The promise of a recovery to a long-lost Golden Age reverberates through us. The heart-chord it strikes has inspired visionaries and idealists from time immemorial. It fuels a healthy discontent that refuses to believe that this is the best we can do. It is an indignation that can't be allayed any longer by comforts and luxuries, that won't be subdued by survival anxiety. It is strongest in the young, and it lies latent in all of us, ready to be roused. It is my purpose, dear reader, to give voice to your indignation and to reaffirm your intuitive knowledge that life is meant to be more.

Today we already can catch a glimpse of the technologies and social forms as well as paradigms of material production of a future in love with life, which encompasses the love of being alive as well as the love of living beings. They are the technologies of the sun, soil and water, of bioenergy and the rhythms of light and sound, word and touch, mind and dreaming, matter and information. All of them arise from and embody a better understanding of ourselves and the world. Just as present-day social forms and technologies have sprung from and reinforce the misunderstanding of separation, 21st-century technology will be the effect of separation's reversal to a very different understanding of the universe articulated on every level from psychology to cosmology. As our crises intensify we will be faced with new choices and new possibilities. Let us recognize the full ramifications and full power of the choices that will soon open up to us. 



*Charles Eisenstein is a speaker and writer focusing on themes of human culture and identity. He is the author of several books, most recently Sacred Economics and The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible. His background includes a degree in mathematics and philosophy from Yale, a decade in Taiwan as a translator, and stints as a college instructor, a yoga teacher, and a construction worker. He currently writes and speaks full-time. He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and four children. View article resources and author information here: [pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html).*

# 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO Change the World

By Andrew Harvey

This is a call to inspire action through *Sacred Activism*—what I define as the transforming force of love and compassion-in-action to bring forth meaningful and radical change in the world.

Let me offer you 10 things you can do right now, or within the next 24 hours, to start to align yourself with the power and hope of Sacred Activism. The first six will invite you into deep, nourishing connection with your spirit; the last four will help you express the compassion and joy this connection awakens in you in action.



**1. Write down now one thing that today has made you feel grateful to be alive.** It could be something as simple as the taste of the bagel you had for breakfast. Set aside a small notebook and make the commitment to write down one thing every day that has lit you up with joy. At the end of a month sit down and read the list out loud, slowly, to yourself. You will discover that it will remind you how blessed you are already just by being alive in a world full of ordinary wonders. You will discover, too, that it will awaken in you a passion for life and a hunger to protect and preserve it.

**2. Now write down, without thinking too much or editing yourself, just “off the top of your heart,” 10 things you would say are “sacred” to you.** Today my list includes: friendship, all you who are reading this, justice, cats, the first roses of summer, all religions, wise elders everywhere who share their wisdom tenderly and tactfully, India, and my brave and wild mother. What is your list? By writing it down you will start to be inspired by your deepest values, beliefs and sources of emboldening joy.

**3. Think of someone who has hurt you or betrayed you and make a commitment to work on forgiving them.** Imagine them, now, in front of you, surrounded by light, happy and well, and pray for them to realize their life’s purpose. Doing this once with humble sincerity will unveil your innate strength of compassion. You will taste its truth and freedom and the desire that is born from it to see all beings happy.

**4. Read a short text from any of the world’s spiritual traditions** that inspires you with the love-wisdom of those prophets and mystics that know God directly.



5. When the text you have chosen starts to light up your spirit, **pray a short prayer that aligns you with the “pure, deep love” that is longing to use you as its instrument in the world.** Here are some, from different traditions, that I use at odd moments throughout my day:

- *Lord, let me live to be truly useful.*
- *Beloved, make me strong enough to do Your will.*
- *Divine Mother, fill me with your passion of compassion so I can do your work tirelessly.*

If none of these inspire you, or reflect your beliefs, make up your own spontaneously and say it 10 times with passion, in the core of your heart.

**6. Make a real commitment now to spiritual practice.** If you do not yet have one, start now, simply. Just sit with your back straight and watch your thoughts for three minutes. Allow your mind, however briefly, to fall silent. In that silence is your greatest treasure, one that will unfold its gold in you if you commit to 20 minutes of simple sitting in the morning and evening before you go to bed. Don't believe me? Try it.

**7. Strengthened by prayer, practice and inspiration, turn now to your life and the people in it.** Everyone, especially in a time like ours, has friends who are in grief, or ill, or looking for a job, or are in real financial difficulty. Commit now to ringing one of them up, and asking him or her what you could do to make their burden easier. Do this soon and be happy that you can.

**8. Make a commitment to miss one meal in the coming 24 hours and send a check for the money you would have spent on it to a reputable organization dealing with world hunger.** Never forget that almost 2 billion people live on less than a dollar a day.

**9. The worldwide financial crisis we are now in is plunging people everywhere into financial distress.** There are families in your immediate vicinity who are suffering. **Make a commitment to find out who they are and what they might need and call on six of your friends to make a commitment with you to begin supplying them what they require.** In acting like this, you will be helping to activate the kind heart of your community. In my experience, more people than you may imagine are longing to be of help; take the first step now yourself, and be surprised and heartened.

**10. Make a commitment today, even if you are in financial difficulty, to tithe between 5 and 10 percent of what you earn to a cause of your choice.** I recommend choosing one particular cause that deeply moves you and sticking to your commitment, whatever happens; over time, tithing like this will give you a great and healing sense of being of use and the cause you are helping will become more and more precious and personal to you, and you will want, naturally and simply, to do more. 



Andrew Harvey is founder and director of the Institute of Sacred Activism, an international organization that invites concerned people to take up the challenge of our contemporary global crises by becoming inspired and effective agents of change. Sacred Activism is a form of compassion-in-action that is born of a fusion of deep spiritual passion with wise radical action in the world.



The large-scale practice of Sacred Activism can become an essential force for preserving and healing the planet and its inhabitants. Andrew Harvey has taught at Oxford and Cornell Universities as well as at various colleges and spiritual centers throughout the world. He has written more than 30 books. Reprinted with permission of

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# THERE IS A CHOICE: HOMEOPROPHYLAXIS An Appeal to Mothers

By Cilla Whatcott, HD RHom, CCH

“The realization hit me with full force that no one was going to look out for my kids as I do. It was up to me. Period. This is when my research began.”

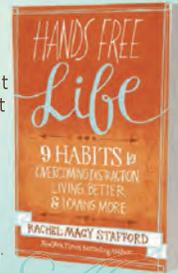


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