

# LOVE FIT

NOVEMBER 2020 ISSUE NO. 6 SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

## LISTEN

Learning to Set Healthy  
Boundaries

## FLOW

Strong Flow with Allie

## SAVOR

Healthy Holiday Sweet Potato  
Casserole

## CURATED CHAOS

& Setting Boundaries  
Navigating Your Emotions in  
Relationships And Finding  
Confidence In Your Truth

FLEX YOUR **SPIRITUAL** MUSCLE

THE SHAKTI SCHOOL  
SUBSCRIPTION

12



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1 Letter from Katie

Setting Healthy Boundaries

## 4 In The Portal

This Month's Workshop

## 12 & 16 Recipes

Sweet Potato Casserole & Pumpkin Pie

## 24 Setting Boundaries

Navigating Your Emotions in Relationships  
And Finding Confidence In Your Truth

## 26 The Science of Abhyanga

Community Contribution by Jule Hare, MD

## 32 Witches

## STAPLES

## 5 Monthly Roadmap

## 9 Staff Picks

## 11 Word of The Month

## 22 November Vedic Astrology

## 36 Gab with the Goddess

## 38 Special Offers

## 41 Vault

## 42 Credits



32



40



# LETTER FROM KATIE

*"You can dance in a  
hurricane, but only if  
you're standing in the  
eye"*

*-Brandi Carlile,  
Song: The Eye*

## How To Be the Calm Within the Storm

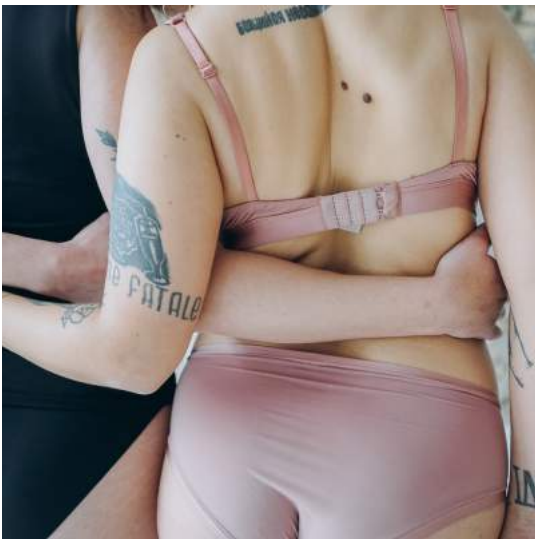
This year has been a wild ride so far, ya'll, and it's not over yet. We are in the era of the Kali Yuga — the time of great tribulation and great learning. We are also embarking on the holiday season in a new way than we have ever before. But, when times are seemingly at their darkest, there is the greatest potential, the teachings say, for LIGHT to come through. With the challenges of the year so far, along with the upcoming holiday season, there is potential upheaval and stress, however, through the chaos that surrounds, there is a part of you that is still, calm and unchanging. A silent, loving, safe retreat within to center yourself and bring that light to your holiday season, whatever it may look like. It's important to cultivate this inner sense of serenity and deep silence, so that you can be the calm eye of the storm when our external world feels out of control. The more we identify with this part of ourselves, and the less we identify with our outer being – the ego personality – the more grounded we become in our lives no matter what is happening externally. Our outer world is always changing and fluctuating, maybe this year more so than ever, but there is a silence within that never changes and is always accessible.





### Some ways to usher in calm and peace surrounding the holidays:

- Stay informed, but don't run to the news every hour. Shakti School is honoring this mentality by taking a break from media, including news, podcasts, and social media through November 3rd #ShaktiShutDown
- If you have family times that may induce stress during the holidays, don't be afraid to take some time to yourself. Go outside for some deep breaths and reorient your senses. You will be able to better show up for yourself and your loved ones this way.
- Be a channel of peace. "Where attention goes, energy flows" - try and tune into what you want your holiday season to be. Manifest and get clear on what you want your family time and holiday season to look like so that you are able to transmit those qualities.
- Be easy on yourself. Allow yourself to feel your feels. It sounds simple, and we've all heard it before, but it can have a profound effect on how you handle stressful situations, such as the holiday season.
- Take stock of and get clear on your boundaries. Many of us struggle in this regard when it comes to family. Remember, you don't have to do anything if it doesn't feel healthy for you. The feeling of obligation can be intimidating, but honoring your health, heart, and personal boundaries is vital to your health and others.



*The calm within the storm is where peace lives and breathes. It is not within perfect circumstances or a charmed life... it is not conditional. Peace is a sacred space within, it is the temple of our internal landscape. We are free to visit it, whenever we seek sanctuary. Underneath the chaos of everyday living, peace is patiently awaiting our discovery... go within."*  
— Jaeda DeWalt



Photo courtesy of PAAVANI Ayurveda



# THIS MONTH IN THE PORTAL

Setting Healthy Boundaries



## VIDEO // Strong Flow: with Allie

Join Shakti School student and sister Allie for a core-strengthening, hour long class that will leave you feeling grounded and strong. Awaken your inner tigress and channel your Shakti energy with this vinyasa style flow that incorporates salutations, concentration, and breath work. You need a healthy, stable solar plexus (physically and energetically) to have good boundaries.



## AUDIO // Boundaries: Let's Get Vertical!

Boundaries, we all have them, and we've all pushed them. In this talk, Katie discusses the driving qualities of boundaries and how they relate to the masculine and feminine parts of us. Learn why boundaries are so vital to health and ways to differentiate and create structure for yourself and others to maintain healthy boundaries within relationships.

## MONTHLY ROADMAP

### WEEK ONE



1. In observance of All Soul's Day, a holiday to honor ancestors that was adapted from pagan traditions: build an altar for a loved one (or loved ones) that have passed. Include their photograph and honor their role in your life, including items from the natural world, each contribution representing an aspect of your lineage.

2. Carve out some time this week to channel your core strength in the physical and emotional body with the Strong Flow with Allie practice.

### WEEK TWO



1. Listen to the audio talk on boundaries, and then journal on the inquiries given at the end. Can you identify an instance where you felt boundaries blur? What are some ways that you personally can align with the vertical?

2. After reading the Abhyanga community article by Dr. Hare, make time for this simple and sweet act of self-love. If you are new to abhyanga and wary of coating yourself in oil, begin with just the feet and put on some soft, yummy socks afterward. If you have children, get them involved with their own abhyanga practice - it's excellent care for all ages!







## WEEK THREE

1. November 15, New Moon. Set an intention for this new lunar cycle. What do you want to focus on in the next 30 days? Share your intention in the Facebook group, it'll give your intention potency.

2. Practice verbalizing your boundaries out loud in a mirror. We get better at setting boundaries when we believe we can authentically speak them. Personalize the phrases to meet your needs.

## WEEK FOUR

1. November 30, Full Moon. Speak your truth. Share in the FB group how you set a boundary recently, or how you plan to set a boundary soon. Let us know your plan of action!

2. Journal: How does a relationship feel when you have healthy boundaries in balance? Try not to focus too much on describing specific instances, but rather tune into how your body feels, your inner knowing, when relationship boundaries are clear and respected.

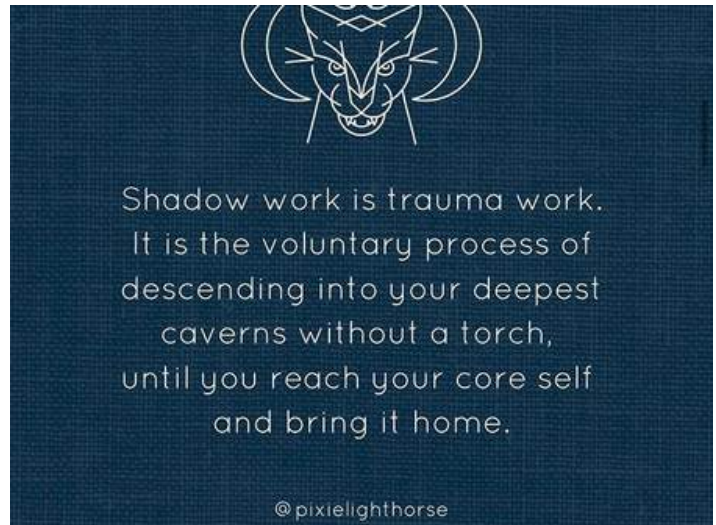






# WHAT WE ARE LOVING

Our Staff Favorites This Month



## BOOK: GOLDMINING THE SHADOWS BY PIXIE LIGHTHORSE



KATIE'S PICK @KatieSilcox4Real

*Goldmining the Shadows* is a profound book on pain. It covers the often, yet unexplained, feelings of deep sadness, emotional trauma, and all other forms and symptoms around feeling unsettled. It is only when we can reveal and rediscover this part of ourselves that the true healing can begin. This book is a beautiful insight on how to break the cycle of suffering that lies within all forms of trauma. A perfect read for the collective trauma of this world.

## MUSIC: Instrumental Folk Playlist on Spotify

AMAURY'S PICK @AmauryRoseline



Is this silly? I'm not sure. All I know is that the world feels like chaos around me and this playlist is helping me rein in some of my news addiction. When I'm tempted to put NPR on, I put this on instead. It's more grounding than ethereal New Age music and the downtempo stuff I usually like to work to. I'm feeling this acoustic mix. Let's listen to this during the #ShaktiShutDown: [Instrumental Folk \(Relaxing and Mellow America\)](#)

## PRODUCT: PAAVANI'S CINNAMON OIL



MARY'S PICK @MaryMcquate

Lately I have been diving deep into the research of oral health. The health of our oral microbiome is very connected to the health of our gut microbiome. It's more common knowledge that what you put into your mouth has a direct effect on your gut microbiome, but what is commonly overlooked is the care we take of our mouth and its relationship to the gut. The ayurvedic ritual of oil pulling is a powerful practice to incorporate into your daily dental routine. It helps to brighten the teeth, purify the gums, and can even help with digestion! PAAVANI'S Cinnamon Oil is loaded with healing ingredients to freshen up your mouth and put you in the fall spirit. :)

## FOOD: GODDESS GHEE



SARAH'S PICK @SarahWaldron417

I am so excited to have discovered this amazing lady-owned and run biz making the most incredible ghee. They source from grass-fed only cows and infused their ghee with delicious spice blends to make adding them to anything really easy. The packaging and presentation of the ghee brings so much joy. I love the Lunar Cacao which is supported by shatavari and maca while being epically delicious. I like to have a little warmed with banana slices in a pan but I could honestly eat it straight from the jar.





# WORD OF THE MONTH

## *Karuna*

Karuna has its roots in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, and is a fundamental quality in them all. Karuna translates to “compassion” in English. The derivation adds specificity: from the Sanskrit ‘kara’, meaning “to do” or “to make,” which makes it actionable compassion. Karuna may be best described as compassionate action taken to alleviate suffering and anguish.

Karuna is the driving force of those who are working to end suffering on Earth. It is the extension of compassionate action to all beings without judgement or divergence. As you practice Karuna, you are not only helping others, but also receiving that compassionate action that is being sent by all other loving beings reflecting back to you. This in turn contributes deeply to your own healing as well as others. May we all exercise Karuna as we move through our day to day and also from an eagle eye perspective in order to channel more healing energy upon our Earth.

Source: <https://www.yogapedia.com/definition/5305/karuna>





## CHOOSE HEALTH FOR THE HOLIDAYS

This is the perfect fall treat to serve on any holiday (or non holiday) table. It is packed full of nutrients, the ingredients are

abundant in fall weather, and it is freaking delicious! It is also such a simple recipe that you could easily whip it up in the last minute, prepare it at a relative's house, or make it ahead of time for a quick reheat.



## Ingredients

### For the Sweet Potato Filling:

3-4 Medium-sized Sweet Potatoes,  
chopped (you can peel them if you'd  
like, but I prefer to keep the skin on  
for the extra fiber!)

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup Full Fat Coconut Milk

3 Tbsp Ghee or Coconut Oil ([LINK  
amazon AFFILIATE HERE](#))

2 Tbsp Coconut Manna ([LINK  
AFFILIATE HERE](#))

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup pure maple syrup

1 tsp salt

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp vanilla bean

### For the Topping:

2 cups pecans, chopped (or kept  
whole for extra decadence)

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  Cup Unsweetened Coconut  
Flakes

2 Tbsp ghee or coconut oil

3 Tbsp pure maple syrup

1 tsp cinnamon

$\frac{1}{4}$  tsp cardamom

pinch salt



## Directions

### FOR THE SWEET POTATO

Place sweet potatoes in a large pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Allow them to boil until they are completely soft (about 15 minutes). Drain and transfer to a food processor. (You can also mash/mix by hand if you do not have a food processor). Add the remaining ingredients (for the mash) to the food processor and blend until it's smooth or has reached your desired consistency. Pour mash into an 8×8 baking dish. Use a spoon to smooth out the surface.

### FOR THE TOPPING:

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In the meantime a medium-sized bowl, combine all of the topping ingredients. Mix well and spread over the sweet potato mash. Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes at 375 degrees. Remove foil and bake for another 20-25 minutes. Keep an eye on the pecans. If they begin to brown. Cover again with the foil.



### For Eating

Best served with a plate of savory deliciousness!

Or, have it as a dessert by adding a spoonful of whipped cream or coconut ice cream.







# ***PUMPKIN PIE***

BUT, HEALTHIER.



## **The Pumpkin Pie You Want To Eat**

*The Sugar Timeline, celebratory events, and why we eat more when we're together (Recipe included)*

The Holidays can be frustrating when it comes to making healthy food choices.

This should be a special time of year when your energy is centered around celebration, togetherness, and joy and where the focus is to spend quality time with the people you love most. Instead it often includes frustration around food decision making, and the fear of uneasy digestion.

On Thanksgiving especially, it's common knowledge that we overeat and typically we overeat sugar.

In North America (and all around the globe) the use of sweets in celebratory events has been a historical tradition. Though the cultivation of sugar dates back to 8,000BC, we see the use of sugar in celebratory event as early as 2,400 BC (!) where there is evidence of beekeeping and the collection honey for honey cakes found at a religious temples near present day Cairo, Egypt. (Hippocrates Health Institute-The Sugar Timeline)

We also see this in the Hindu/Yoga tradition where bringing sweets to the temple as an offering to the God's is commonly practiced. Traditionally, before industrial sugar cane manufacturing, sweets were more of a luxury item and were considered "Sattvic," or pure. Of course, this is in reference to sugar in the form of

dates and honey which aren't nearly as taxing on the body as the chemically refined sugar we most commonly use today. As sugar cane evolved into the chemically refined substance that we know all too well now, it became more accessible and affordable and unfortunately we see a direct correlation to the rise of Alzheimer's, diabetes and obesity. Instead of sugar being used a sacred treat, or offering, it became readily available to everyone, all the time, in unnatural states and in absurd quantities.

***So, how do we go back to making sugar sacred?***

It all comes back to eating whole foods and preparing food at home. For most Americans, having access to healthy ingredients and the time to prepare food at home is a luxury. If we all made an effort to only eat sugar when we could prepare our own sweet treats, it would likely lead to much healthier options (no matter if you're cooking with white sugar or not). The act of cooking for others truly is sacred and the Thanksgiving holiday is a perfect time to make food that is celebratory, healthy, and sweet.

***What about when it comes to overeating?***

It's interesting to note that a food study in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in 2013 concluded that people tend to eat more calorically dense food and more volumes of food—depending on the information they're given about what other people are eating. Similarly, the same study showed that we even synchronize our bites, the same way we subconsciously mirror someone else's posture or body language, without ever realizing it. Simply becoming aware of this fact is enough to make you think differently and possibly act differently when you sit down at the Thanksgiving table. If you are able to be more aware when you're eating it not only will help you to make more thoughtful choices about your meal, but it could actually help those you are eating with to make more thoughtful choices about what they are eating as well.

***Now, let's go back to celebrating.***

Now that we've established that we all love the occasional sweet treat and we want to celebrate with some sort of sacred sugary dessert, it's important to choose something that is still balanced and nourishing, not something that is loaded with white flour & white sugar.

This is especially important when you want your energy to be sustained through those long evening chats with cousin Kristie. So, how can we be sure a healthy option shows up to the Thanksgiving table? Bring it yourself! If you want your family to be blown away, show up to the holiday dinner party with this amazing (and healthy) Pumpkin Pie !!! It's not going to spike your blood sugar, it's going to make everyone in the room happy, and eating it might even be a sacred act.

## *Recipe for The Pumpkin Pie You Want To Eat*

**For the Crust:**

*2 cups pitted dates  
2 cups raw nuts (I used half pecans, half walnuts)  
1/4 cup unsweetened coconut flakes  
1 tbsp of coconut oil  
1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice  
1/2 tsp cinnamon  
A dash of salt*



**For the Filling :**

*2 cans of pumpkin puree  
1/2 cup of cashews (previously soaked)  
1/4 cup melted coconut oil  
3-5 tablespoons maple syrup  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon each of nutmeg, ginger and cloves  
pinch sea salt  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract*









### **Directions:**

#### **For the crust:**

*Pulse the nuts & coconut flakes in a food processor until they're crumbs, add the dates and the remaining ingredients and process until it begins to stick together. Press into a pie dish and put in the fridge (or freezer) to harden.*

#### **For the filling:**

*Blend all of the ingredients until smooth, adding however much of the spices you like. Pour into your crust and freeze overnight until it's set. The next day transfer to the fridge to let it thaw out. Take it out of the refrigerator 15-20 min prior to serving.*

### **Top with your favorite homemade whipped cream!**

(It's best to use an organic Grass-Fed Heavy whipping cream or you can try this recipe below for a vegan coconut whipped cream).

#### **Vegan Coconut Whipped Cream:**

*1 can coconut cream or full fat coconut milk (Cream tends to work better)*

*3 TBSP of organic powdered sugar (optional)*

*1 tsp vanilla extract*

*\*Place the can of coconut cream into the refrigerator and leave it there overnight*

*\*The next day, take it out and carefully open it*

*\*Scoop out only the cream into the bowl of an electric mixer, leaving the coconut water behind.*

*\*Start with a slow speed and gradually increase speed until you achieve a whipped cream consistency*

*\*Once you have whipped cream consistency, Add your powdered sugar and vanilla*

*\*Whisk again until it's mixed in.*









Photos courtesy of PAAVANI Ayurveda



# YOUR MONTH IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY



”

*“From delusion, lead me to  
truth;  
From darkness, lead me to  
light;  
And from death, lead me to  
immortality.”*

*~ Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad  
1.3.28*

## STARDUST IN NOVEMBER

Dr. Katy Jane @DrKatyJane

**The start of November heralds one of the most sacred times of the years in the Vedic calendar: Diwali, “The Festival of Light.”**

On Diwali, we welcome the arrival of Lakshmi, goddess of light, as she makes her way from the deep underworld to enter our homes and hearts. She ushers in the holiest month of the Vedic calendar on the new moon (November 15th), culminating with the full moon in the Pleiades (“A Handful of Doves”) on November 30th.

Night falls on this new moon like a hammer—blunt and swift—heralding the start of the three days of Diwali. It’s one of the darkest nights of the year.

Not only is the moon decidedly absent, but the sun reaches its lowest point of debilitation in the Svati constellation—the exact midpoint of the zodiac. In that darkest moment the goddess arrives, bearing enlightened insight. It’s an excellent time to assess how you spent the last year—what you gained and what you lost.

The feeling of the night communicates Diwali’s central message:

Out of abject darkness comes the light. Its meaning is summarized by the insights of Viktor Frankl,

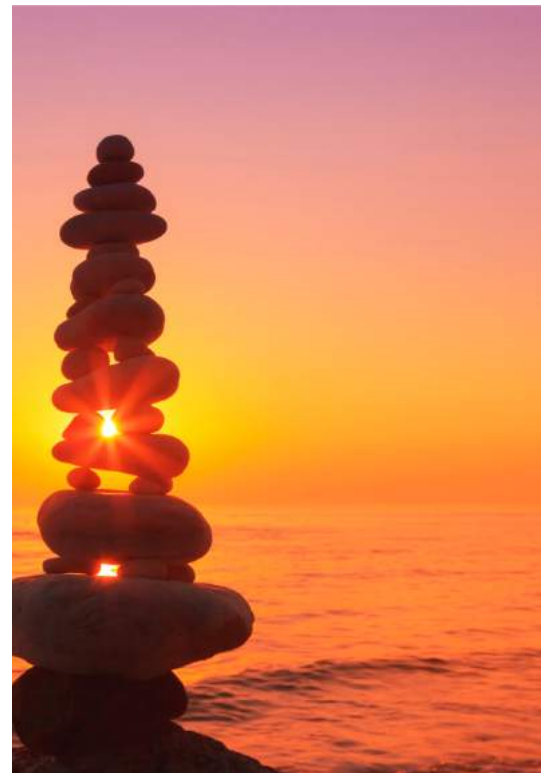
*“The light of a match once lit changes the darkness forever.”*

Diwali is a time of total equality. The darkness serves our recognition of the light. One of its symbols is the weighing scale—with two sides balanced in equanimity. Similarly, Lakshmi embodies and resolves all the inequities of the year.

On this night in the village where I live in India (Dunagiri), women light seven small candles called dīyās to invite goddess Lakshmi to reside in the body of their homes and its residents. A perfect symmetry is formed between the seven stars of the Pleiades, the dīyās in the house and the cakras in the body. The entire universe comes into perfect aligned balance.

In cities, fire-crackers are lit to signal Lakshmi’s arrival. Whereas darkness opposes light—and death opposes life—now an integrated whole is established. Everyone parties in their best clothes, gambling the night away to settle old scores.

The sacred night of Diwali celebrates the reconciliation of all opposites. And Lakshmi is the reconciler, bearing a powerful astrological message for the month: Wealth, enlightenment and knowledge result from becoming ceaselessly even.









# curated chaos & setting boundaries

NAVIGATING YOUR EMOTIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS AND FINDING CONFIDENCE IN YOUR TRUTH

**Setting healthy boundaries** is a crucial part of self care. It is the ultimate way to protect your energy, to create more confidence and to navigate through life with more satisfaction and ease.

*I don't know about you, but I could use a little more ease in 2020.*

Unfortunately, it's not exactly easy to start setting boundaries. It doesn't usually come as a natural trait. Our society is constantly rewarding those who do not set healthy boundaries: the overworked man, the mom that can do it all, the YES men & women.

It is this kind of behavior that has been the norm throughout our generation and perhaps even more so in our parent's generation, which is where we first learn these societal norms. When boundaries aren't appropriately in place it can lead to a lot of later resentment, emotional triggers, or even a feeling of disease in the physical body (*you know we're all about that mind/body connection*).

*So, how do you know that you may need to start setting boundaries?*

- **Guilt/Fear/Shame**

You feel guilty when you put your needs before others. This is possibly associated with a depleted self esteem.

Most of us want to be liked, accepted, and loved, but when it comes to risking your health (remember, both mental & physical) you may have an underlying need for some self worth homework. This is where boundaries come in. As soon as you start emphasizing the importance of your own needs and taking action on that, you will begin to shift those feelings of unworthiness.

- **You have a hard time saying NO**

Saying no is a huge part of setting boundaries. And, along with saying no we often feel like we need to explain why. But, not over explaining is another part of setting boundaries. Stepping into the confidence of who you are and what your needs are will begin to shift the guilt mindset.

- **You Don't Ask yourself What YOU want**

If you are unsure of what you want in whatever relationship you are creating boundaries around, it's important to figure that out first. This will help you become more clear, will limit conflict, and will make communication much easier. Breaking through such societal norms can be scary, sensitive, and emotional. And, it's important to recognize that setting boundaries takes time.

*Continued on the next page*

*Tips to Start Setting Boundaries*

**Take Action**

In order to really begin to make a shift, you have to take action. Using your verbal skills can be important, but what is even more important is following up with the action to support your decisions.

**Say No and then Move on**

Let go. After you've said no, try to limit the amount of time you stick around for the reactions. That can create a more of the muddled reality you are trying to rid yourself of. This may look like turning off your phone, deleting a contact, or just walking away. Taking a step back can often be a very powerful action towards healing.

**Don't Take It Personally**

Others may not like or respect your boundaries. And, these negative reactions could be coming from people that you deeply love and respect which makes it more difficult to be firm in your decisions. But, try to take yourself out of their reactions. Taking care of yourself will ultimately help them in their own process. Confidence in your words can create more ease.



*Written by Mary McQuate*



# THE SCIENCE OF ABHYANGA

BY JULIE HARE, MD



अभ्यङ्गमाचरेन्नित्यं स जराश्रमवातहा ।  
द्रुष्टिप्रसादपुष्ट्यायुःस्वप्नसुत्वक्त्वदाढ्यकृत् ॥८॥

## The Science of Abhyanga

*“Oil massage should be performed regularly. It destroys aging, exhaustion, and vata. It improves vision, nourishment, longevity, sleep, health of skin and makes the body strong.”*

**- Ashtanga Hridayam, Sutra 2.9**

*“Abhyanga is an ancient practice which predates the Vedic period. Early humans practiced lifesustaining ways of manipulating the body to produce strength, mobility, flexibility and fluent memory, memory which interlaced with the cosmos. Vitally linked to the profound harmony of the earth, the ancients knew every movement in the cosmos to be filled with the universal abhyanga. The leaves and bark of the trees are continually massaged by the wind: the rocks and pebbles are rubbed by the streams and rivers: the animals, brushed by space, wind and the forest, are forever toned by abhyanga.”*

**- Maya Tiwari, Ayurveda: Secrets of Healing**

What can we do to make ourselves healthier? This has become an international focus, escalating in 2020 on the tails of a pandemic. The quest to achieve optimal health has no one answer and can vary greatly from person to person. Yet, there are some core, universal aspects to health. These aspects, these essential tools and resources, we are finding, are rather simple. We can even say they are about simplicity. Simplicity. In the insanity of an ever-growing complex modern, technologically driven world we are coming back to the simple things. Good, plain food and water. Routines that don't swallow every minute of our lives in activity. Movement practices that strengthen and enliven the body and mind. Getting consistently good sleep is essential. With so many of us trapped indoors, under stress of uncertainty and constant readjustment, routine and physical care has become one of our top priorities. So, the more simple the better. But what do we choose? With limited resources, so many choices and the ever-mounting confusion generated by the wellness industry – how can a person objectively land on a product or a practice with confidence?

**Enter abhyanga.** Ayurveda, India's ancient system of medicine, offers abhyanga therapy as a basic and immediately effective modality as part of a self-care routine. Abhyanga is the traditional therapeutic massage of Ayurveda. It is often used in dinacharya (daily routine) practice as a self-massage technique. It is also a core therapy in Panchakarma (the main detoxification process of Ayurveda). The health benefits of abhyanga have been known for thousands of years. At the end of this essay, I will give some resources for learning how to do this for yourself at home. But first, let's look at some science.

As Western medical knowledge reaches new depths, it is rediscovering the ancient wisdom of the East. Western medicine is finally recognizing what many cultures over generations have known to be useful and effective. Through this recognition science is adding a new dimension of understanding to these ancient therapies and techniques. This is important because we need to scientifically “legitimize” these otherwise “woo-woo” practices in order to bring them into the forefront of care. In doing so we can make new and more effective standards in modern health practices.

This is rather like eating an elephant. But how does one eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Here, we examine the known science supporting the practice of abhyanga. The word abhyanga is derived from the Sanskrit roots anga, meaning movement and abhi, meaning different, against or contrary. Abhyanga is, simply, the act of applying oil to the skin with simple massage techniques. In Panchakarma, the oil is often medicated with multiple herbs infused, specific to patient therapy, and applied warm with a variety of stroke, percussive and pressure techniques 1.

*Continued on the next page*



Each generates a therapeutic effect. Abhyanga administered during Panchakarma is often done with two people, massaging in tandem. But Abhyanga can be as simple as using a plain oil (often sesame), self-applied liberally to the skin, massaging the extremities, head, face, back and abdomen. Abhyanga has many reported benefits – both physical, emotional and energetic. Oiling of the skin maintains skin integrity and hydration. Stimulation of the underlying deep tissues such as muscle and fascia generates relaxation, pain reduction and an overall sense of wellbeing that improves fatigue recovery and general muscle function. Abhyanga provides a massage of the lymphatic system creating an effective mode of deep tissue detoxification. It is deeply relaxing, as are most massage techniques. However, abhyanga also stimulates splanchnic circulation, the blood flow via a fine network of small blood vessels to the gastrointestinal tract and abdominal organs 1,2. Abhyanga is a mainstay of treatment for anxiety related issues 3.

There has been little scientific research done to objectively examine abhyanga therapy. Abhyanga, however, is a form of massage and therefore can be examined as a part of this general practice. As there is a great deal of scientific exploration on the general topic of massage it is reasonable to begin to validate abhyanga therapy through this lens.

Massage has been a core therapeutic tool in medicine for millennia. Evidence of its use as a therapy is seen in China, Egypt and India starting around the second century BC. Hippocrates simply defined medicine as “the art of rubbing” This highlights the notion of touch therapy as a core medicinal tool. When you stop to think about it, every human practices massage therapy. Ever painfully bang your knee and reflexively start to rub it? There is something inherently comforting about touch in general. But, what sort of clear benefits are derived from massage? A review of literature finds a wealth of international studies on the benefits of massage as a medical therapy.

There are many benefits of massage. If I had to pick the most important one, it would be stress reduction. By now, I think most people are becoming aware of how incredibly detrimental stress is to the body-mind. Stress tears down body tissues. It also drives poor decision making. When a person is stressed and



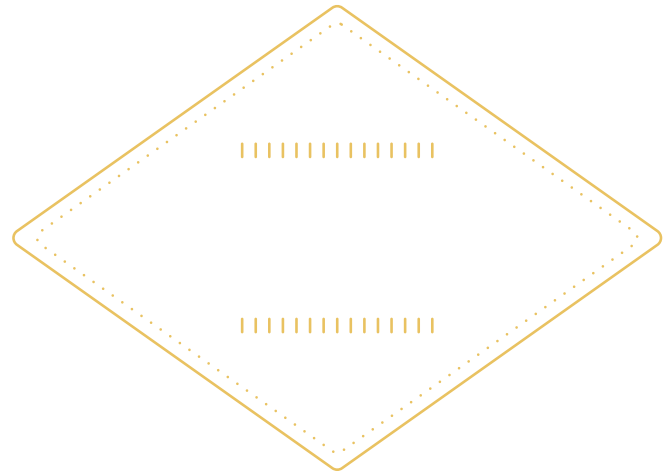
doesn't know how to deal with it they can tend to lean on addictive substances and ultimately self-destructive behaviors as coping mechanisms. Cigarettes, food, drugs, prescription valium.... Stress alters the physical chemistry we live in moment to moment, prematurely aging the body and generating disease states. Chronic stress is bad for you.

Abhyanga massage therapy has been directly shown to help modulate stress. A simple study done in a Korean nursing school administered foot massages for a brief period of time to a group of lucky nursing students in order to examine the effect of massage on subjective stress. The experimental group (the ones getting the massage) reported improved mood, decreased fatigue, and had lower blood pressure readings (systolic and diastolic) as compared to the control group (those who did not receive foot massage) 4.

Another simple yet elegant study with a group of nurses demonstrated a significantly reduced perception of stress at work when given a 10 min chair massage during their shift versus those who just received a break 5. Abhyanga has been given to infants as a long-standing tradition in India to

*Continued on the next page*

promote health and well-being right at the start of life. Science has shown that massage does indeed help babies thrive. Repeated studies have demonstrated improved growth and vitality in infants who were preterm or drug exposed 6.7. Massage of full-term infants demonstrated the same. Additionally, these studies also measured increased alertness and less fussiness in the massage group. Newborn massage showed cognitive benefits at one year of age. This result has also been shown in animal models. Rats regularly deprived of touch were shown to have higher circulating stress hormones (glucocorticoids) and signs of impaired memory 8.9. Research of this sort is supportive to abhyanga practice as a method for vitality and longevity. Abhyanga has been traditionally reported to alleviate pain. This is thought to occur in massage therapy by activating the 'pain gate' mechanism. Touch uses a faster, larger set of nerves than pain does, so touch sensation is transmitted 'over' pain.



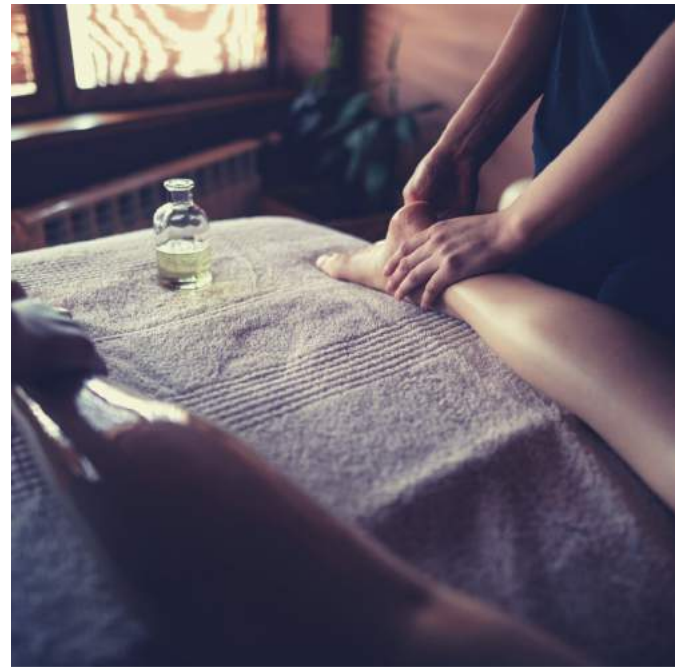


Also, massage triggers discomfort pathways that activate areas of the midbrain that in turn stimulate the spinal cord to release endogenous opiates 10,11,12,13 . This is the physical basis of how something can “hurt so good”. If you have ever been the recipient of a deep tissue massage - or two-person abhyanga - then you understand this. The massage can be uncomfortable, even painful, but the after effect is usually amazing. Abhyanga, especially when administered during Panchakarma or done regularly during a dinacharya, is used to help build healthy tissue. This has been demonstrated scientifically in studies using massage therapy to prevent denervated muscle from atrophy and contracture 14,15.

These are old studies. We have long known that physical manipulation of muscle tissue can help maintain its bulk, even if the nerve to that muscle is severed. Abhyanga offers a bounty of other benefits seen directly in massage therapy. It addresses insomnia caused by emotional and medical conditions 16 . It promotes increased blood flow, improved lymphatic function and therefore serves a major detoxification modality 17,18 . I believe more scientific study into abhyanga therapy would reveal even further benefits. Abhyanga not only incorporates many different stroking, kneading, and other stimulatory techniques but it is often done with medicated oils, heat, acupuncture and the use of marma point stimulation.

Marma points are areas on the body that allow cutaneous access to deeper structures and energy pathways. This is beyond the scope of this essay, but it is mentioned to highlight the grander scheme of complexity that is rolled into this one therapy. For those of us who practice therapeutic modalities like massage, we don't really “need” science to tell us how beneficial they are. However, as modern medicine begins to shift towards a more holistic approach that aims to actually heal chronic conditions, the necessity for a practice to be scientifically backed becomes increasingly important. Imagine a world where you go to your doctor for anxiety, depression, pain or insomnia and instead of (or perhaps in addition to) an antidepressant or Valium, you were offered acupuncture or massage as part of your treatment?

I believe this day is coming. The good news is that you don't need a doctor, you can have all the benefits of massage therapy through self-administration.



Learn to do abhyanga with these tutorials:

#### How to get started doing abhyanga:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_HQLsfZh5js](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HQLsfZh5js)

Again, simplicity is key here. After working with patients and clients for years, I have found some people are overwhelmed by getting themselves completely oily. So don't. Start massaging your feet with oil every night before bed. Do your hands. Work up to doing your arms and legs. Try applying a few drops of oil to the top of your scalp. Go from there if you like, don't if you don't want to. You have permission to do what feels right to you, you do not have to follow any “rules”.

When done even just semi regularly, at-home abhyanga has tremendous benefits. After years of “prescribing” abhyanga to people the feedback I get still surprises me: they start dreaming again, they have better sex, their digestion improves, their hair grows back, etc.... Amazing what a little inward attention (i.e. self-love) will do. As we learn over and over again in life, perfection is not required. You do not have to run from your life and join an ashram in order to heal and rejuvenate. Just dialing back on the stress-o-meter can get you far down the road. We all need to regularly get out of our heads and back into our bodies. Your ability to do this as close as your two hands.

*Written by Julie Hare, MD*

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# WITCHES



TRUE STORIES FROM THE HISTORY OF WITCHERY





### An Insight into Witches

I don't know about you, but in my many years of studying alternative medicine and other various forms of self healing practices, there have been numerous times I have been called a witch. Of course these instances were harmless and even laugh-able to myself, but that's only because I recognize the true history of the witch and even thought of it as a compliment. But, does everyone know the true history of witches? Sadly, I don't think so.



Over the years the image of the witch has gone through many transformations. I am sure you have probably seen the common image of the witch (as portrayed in the Halloween tradition). She is often scary, dark, and associated with evil and ugly tendencies. She wears a black pointy hat and commutes via broomstick. However, what you may not have seen is the first and perhaps more accurate portrayal of a witch: Goddess-like, radiant, and beautiful.

In ancient times (throughout many cultures) such women were seen as deities. These were the women who were healers, midwives, and great cooks of potions and tonics. They were healers of fertility and nurturers that used nature as the ultimate healer.

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These were the same women who have been linked back to certain cave images of Creation Goddesses depicted in many ancient archaeological findings. Not only were they not seen as evil, but they were exalted for their ability to help heal.

### *So, what was the shift?*

Some scholars believe that as civilizations evolved and the need for the warrior increased, the recognition of the woman as a powerful healer and nurturer of the land gradually decreased. It is thought that over time this power dynamic led to not only her status being diminished, but in an effort to do so she was associated with various labels: crazy, witch, devil-worshipper, etc. Any woman making potions, dancing naked under the moonlight, and having sex out of wedlock was definitely a witch and was definitely evil.

I find it interesting that these are the very practices we talk and teach women about at The Shakti School. We absolutely love potions, tonics, and tinctures. We encourage using nature as healer, to learn about the cycles of the moon, and if at all possible (in a legal and private setting) lay naked on mother earth's floor! Talk about the ultimate grounding.

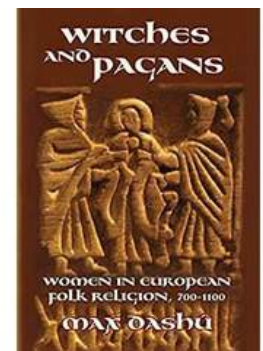
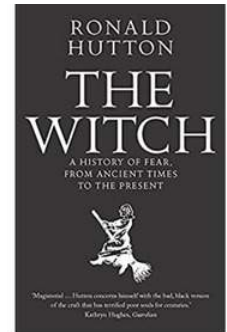
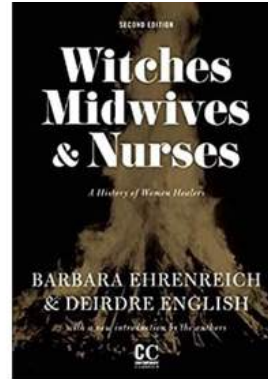
### *So, maybe I am a witch.*

*To learn more about the history of witches and to find out if you too may be a witch, I suggest diving deeper into these resources.*

### *History of Witches Video*

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/history-of-witches>

## *Witchy Resources*





All photos courtesy of PAAVANI Ayurveda



# GAB WITH THE GODDESS

## ADVICE FOR THE LOVEFIT WOMAN

*I want to want sex I really do...but most of the time I don't. I enjoy it once it's happening but never really want it. What can I do to light my desire fire?*

~Not tonight I have a headache

### Dear Not Tonight,

I hear you on this. It's hard to keep the passion alive in modern, long-term relationships. The dynamics of modern relationships + modern life are such that women are often spending a lot of time exercising their masculine aspects at work (and they're stressed out), and so they have a difficult time switching gears enough to want sex at the end of the day.

Here's what I mean: often in relationships what goes wrong are the polarity dynamics. You and your partner bond deeply, and become "best friends", so much so that the hormonal chemistry necessary for passion and libido goes down. Essentially, you merge too much. That, coupled with the fact that when women experience stress it zaps their libido, is a recipe for plummeting sex drive. Our bodies can't effectively make sex hormones like estrogen at the same time as stress hormones like cortisol.

### Here are some tips to get you going:

1. **Exercise:** moving and being in your body, getting hot and sweaty at least 3 times a week, is one of the best things you can do for your libido. It's going to get you back in your body. Try cardio, HIIT, salsa.

2. **Maca:** I love this herb, it will boost your libido. I really like the Moonbeli Bliss Booster formula.

### 3. Taking time apart from your partner:

separate hobby caves, some separate vacations, some separate friends, and time apart. You need to have your own life. When you merge too much with someone, it's normal that you don't feel a need to have sex with them (sex is merging and implies separation, But if there's no separation...).

A whole village of people used to provide us various relationships and support structures. Now we expect way more from our one romantic partner to make up for that, but it actually kills the romance. There's a reason sex is so hot at the beginning of relationships, and it's because you're very much two separate, independent people, which creates magnetism between you two, like opposite sides of a magnet.

4. **Read:** *Mating in Captivity* by Esther Perel & the Sexy section of Katie's book *Health Happy Sexy - Ayurvedic Wisdom for Modern Women*

Continued on next page



**5. Take some time for extra sexy self-care:**

Self-pleasure in the bath, buy a new sex toy just for you, rub your whole body in oil and spend extra time massaging your breasts, wear clothes that make you feel sexy, read some raunchy novels.

**6. Flirt:** flirting is so healthy, in and outside of the relationship. Enjoy other people enjoying the sight of beautiful you. It's harmless and it'll boost your estrogen so you're more turned on when you get home.

*Play with your partner at home.* Sex doesn't start in the bedroom at night, it starts first thing in the morning. Flirt all day. Send your partner a sexy text midday to stoke their fire, you'll start to build some momentum so you have something to work with when you get home. And then try to have sex before dinner, digesting kills libido.

**7. Imagine** A great trick is imaging that your partner is new to you, that everything isn't a given. If you can imagine them as not your partner, but this sexy person you absolutely must know, it'll light a fire of desire in you. Next time you're out and about, try looking at your partner as if you're another person who doesn't know them; imagine them as other people see them. Once they're not necessarily "your husband" or "your partner" anymore, you'll see how bad you want them.

In closing, you have to turn yourself on. Investigate what parts of your life are sucking you dry of your sex drive. Change it up. Find a little space from your partner to find that chemistry that initially brought you together.

Sincerely,  
*The Shakti Goddesses*

Written by @AmauryRoseline



# MONTHLY COUPON

THE SHAKTI SCHOOL SUBSCRIPTION



## NOVEMBER DISCOUNT With PAAVANI

This month, all LOVEFIT subscribers receive a special discount on all PAAVANI Ayurveda products. **Use the code LOVEFIT15** at checkout to receive an extra **15 % off!**

Ongoing LOVEFIT promos:  
[LakaLiving](#) use **Shakti10** at checkout

## Why we freaking LOVE this brand

*Ancient Ayurveda for The Modern World*

This month we are so excited to be partnering up (again) with our favorite ladies of **PAAVANI Ayurveda**. PAAVANI Ayurveda is a female owned business focused on creating small batch, pure, organic health and skincare products. Handcrafted in California, their products offer ancient Ayurveda to the modern world. We are in total alignment with PAAVANI intent to reconnect people to their innate body wisdom which is a core teaching in Tantra Ayurveda.



PAAVANI ayurveda recognizes that through understanding & honoring our individual needs, we nurture the cultivation of health & beauty from within.

Not only are we in full support of this beautiful company's ethos, but their products are amazing and it's so evident that they are created with intentionality and love. Take advantage of this amazing promo and visit

<https://paavaniayurveda.com>

*All photos courtesy of PAAVANI Ayurveda*









## A Sex-Positive Platform That Merges Porn + Sexual wellness

### Introducing AfterGlow

Jacky B., a current Shakti School student and former Director of Partnerships at Wanderlust and Daybreaker, has focused her energy on taking down the adult media patriarchy. Bringing her learnings from Ayurveda school to her professional life, Jacky is evoking feminine-form leadership as the Head of Partnerships at *Afterglow* in an effort to create a new sex-positive platform that merges sexual wellness and adult media.

*Afterglow*, offering porn focused on women's pleasure, has officially launched an Indiegogo campaign to fund their first films, build a strong community, and to ultimately support their mission.

The afterglow mission: afterglow's core initiative is to encourage everyone to love and embrace their sexuality and diverse desires through creating a virtual platform

on which their audience is made to feel comfortable and accepted.

More than a space where one can talk openly and unashamedly about sex, this platform will cultivate the unabashed enjoyment of sex through mouth-watering, sex positive content that highlights the pleasure of all participants.

#### The afterglow platform:

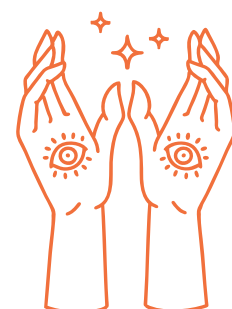
afterglow's aim is to eliminate societal stigma and begin normalizing sex, and porn, for the next generation. The platform is a direct response to cultural norms that work to disconnect people from their bodies and discourage them from discovering, discussing and asking for what they want.

Afterglow will offer content ranging from original and licensed adult films to educational articles, audio, and even guided masturbations.

Porn focused on women's pleasure? Yes, it's true! afterglow merges porn + sexual wellness, offering not just sexy videos but stories, articles and exercises that help you get off however you feel best. This is your only chance to buy a lifetime afterglow membership. Curious for more?

Learn how to join the movement:

[xoafterglow.com](http://xoafterglow.com)



# LOVEFIT VAULT

## FOR MORE ON BOUNDARIES

Listen to [Haters Gonna Hate: Working with Critics Mindfully](#). In this episode of *The Ghee Spot*, Katie discusses her journey with trolls and how she applies the Tantra of feedback and learning to creating boundaries internally and externally.

Tune into [The Inner Child Archetype Work](#) lecture in the subscription from March 2020 for clarity on the voices to receive and which to leave in order to clear blockages and support healthy bounds.

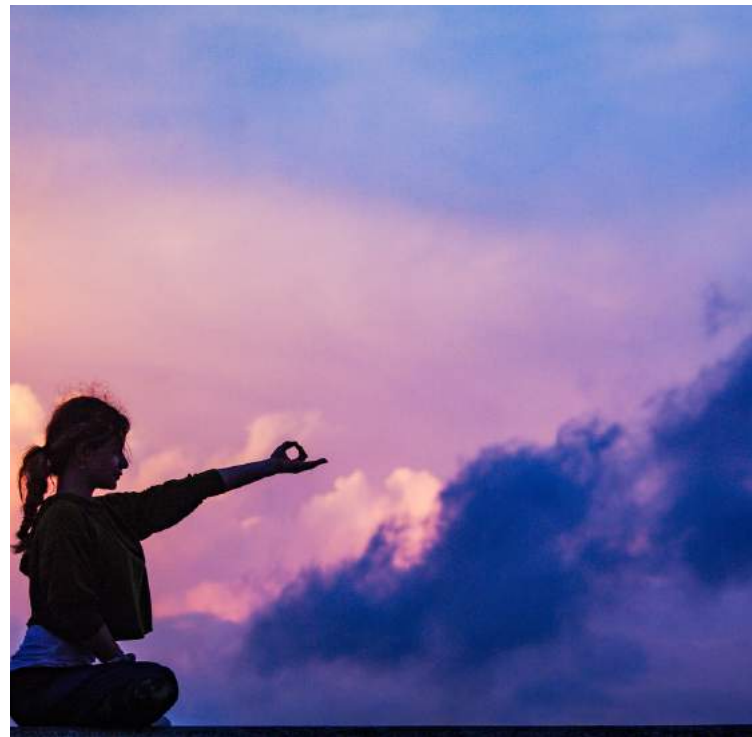
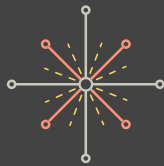
For a discussion with a Shakti School teacher and friend on creating boundaries and worth in the workplace, especially when getting your career started, tune into The Ghee Spot for [Don't Work For Free with Chef Meredith Klein](#).

The Relationship Talk from February 2019 on [Polarity and Relationship Bubbles](#) is great for guidance on creating healthy attitudes within relationships and recognizing situations where you may be giving your power away.

[Boundaries and Relationships: Knowing, Protecting and Enjoying the Self by Charles Whitfield](#) is one of Katie's favorite books on boundaries, and the resource mentioned in the audio.

UP NEXT IN OUR DECEMBER  
ISSUE:

*Holistic Holiday*



Don't forget to follow us on Instagram for more recipes  
and Divine Feminine wisdom [@katiesilcox\\_shaktischool](#)





# Special Thanks



**PAAVANI Ayurveda** is female-owned artisan line of small-batch, pure, organic health & skincare products formulated in Northern California. Handcrafted with the wisdom of Ayurveda, their products offer ancient traditions to the modern world, with the intent to reconnect people to their innate body wisdom.

PAAVANI Ayurveda stands behind the philosophy, that what is harmonious for one may not be for another. This is a concept that plays a significant role in the fundamental roots of Ayurveda. Through understanding & honoring our individual needs, we nurture the cultivation of health & beauty from within.

For more about PAAVANI Ayurveda & to enjoy their products visit <https://paavaniayurveda.com/>



**Julie Hare MD**, is a board-certified Family Physician, certified Ayurvedic health counselor and organic farmer. She works in a critical access hospital in the heart of Appalachia. Julie runs a small private client business, Allegheny Integrative Medicine, working with people to manage and heal chronic conditions.

She has a blog, *The Damn Doctor* (just for fun), and is passionate about being part of the movement to establish the East-West connection in medicine that our world so desperately needs.

You can reach out to her on either website or on Facebook or Instagram: @thedamndoctor.

<https://www.alleghenyintegrativemedicine.com/>  
<https://www.thedamndoctor.com/>



**Dr. Katy Jane** is a spiritual guide, teacher and author. Her expertise is to guide you on a journey toward deeper self-awareness, greater inner peace, and wiser choices aligned with your most authentic life purpose—especially when you're at a crucial turning point in your life, practice and teaching.

Katy was named One of the top 75 yogis who are shifting the planet by Origin Magazine. She is the author of *Awakening with Sanskrit* and *Sanskrit for Yogis: An Introduction to Nada, the Yoga of Sacred Sound*. As a scholar in Sanskrit, the Vedas and classical yoga she helps others access the wisdom teachings at the core of their own practice. And, she also specializes in helping seekers at crucial transitions develop successful life strategies with the guiding light of Jyotisha Astrology. She currently lives between India and the USA where she teaches Sanskrit courses, Jyotisha (Vedic astrology) coaching, and leads spiritual retreats to the holy Himalayas.

To learn more about Katy visit [www.drkatyjane.com](http://www.drkatyjane.com).

Designed and Edited with LOVE by The Shakti School Team

For more visit [TheShaktiSchool.com](http://TheShaktiSchool.com)