

A person's hand is visible on the left, holding a piece of fabric with a green and white abstract pattern. The background is a bright, out-of-focus white. The word "JOY!" is written in large, bold, black letters across the center. The word "Cultivate" is written in a smaller, italicized font to the left of "JOY!". The word "HOW TO LIVE LIGHTER" is written in a smaller, bold, black font below "JOY!". The phrase "Think positive. Dream. Choose your bliss." is written in a smaller, italicized font below "HOW TO LIVE LIGHTER". The text "BY EMILY LEAS AND HYWANIA THOMPSON" is written in a small, bold, black font below the phrase. The text "OCTOBER 2017 | BRAVAMAGAZINE.COM 45" is written in a small, bold, black font at the bottom right.

*Cultivate*

# JOY!

HOW TO LIVE LIGHTER

*Think positive. Dream. Choose your bliss.*

BY EMILY LEAS AND HYWANIA THOMPSON

# Choose WISELY

## RECIPES AND ACTIONS FOR MINDFUL LIVING

Who is busiest? Happiest? Most successful? Most stressed? These are the judgements that often drive our day. Tina Paulus-Kraus, owner of True You, a sacred space for women to grow in mind, body and spirit, says these drivers can be the starting point for awareness. Use them to acknowledge that you want more happiness in your life, then give yourself the tools to change it.

When you feel out of sorts, Paulus suggests you start by focusing on gratitude. Look for the little things right in front of you to turn your mindset around and find something good about that moment.

Another way to be mindful and centered, she says, is to challenge yourself in a tough situation with go-to truth-seeking phrases.

Am I being my best self right now?

“Everything is a choice and it’s so easy to make the easy choice,” she says. “This phrase pulls me back and allows me

to make the right choice instead of the easy choice.”

Why am I holding on to this?

“This question helps me re-frame my reaction and start making better decisions,” says Paulus-Kraus. We tend to bury our emotions. If those emotions aren’t questioned in the moment, that baggage comes out as the same bad and toxic choices we’ve made before.

Sarah Higgins, yoga instructor, health coach and founder of MindBodySoulMoms, a Facebook group for daily “mom-  
spiration,” forces herself to respond to tough situations with one of two variables: Fear or love.

“I recognize in those moments, that I can respond to this emotion or this situation with fear, which also includes anger, or my ego, or judging someone or myself,” she explains. “Or I can respond from a place of love and acceptance.”

Boil it down to these choices and she says peace and mindfulness is easier to find. —Emily Leas

## FOCUS INSIDE & OUT

### TIPS FOR PEACE

#### BODY

*Get adequate hydration*

*Get outside everyday*

*Create a morning routine*

#### SOUL

*Practice forgiveness*

*Advocate for others*

*Volunteer and serve others*

*Create art just for the sake of creating*

*Eat with loved ones and friends*

It’s all about practice, says MindBodySoulMoms’ Sarah Higgins, to make a lasting difference with these tips.

But it’s also about getting real: Being happy 100 percent of the time is an unrealistic and unhealthy expectation.

“When you’re having emotions that are not happy or joyful, it helps you understand and appreciate joy and levity and happiness,” she says. “To have a real life-lived experience, to grow wiser, to mature, to experience the gift of life, we need joy and levity—but also all that other stuff to appreciate it.”

So lean in to the uncomfortable and find the tricks that put your mind, body and soul at peace. —E.L.



# *Put Your Head in the* **CLOUDS**

DAYDREAM A LITTLE MORE

As a child, how many times were you scolded for daydreaming?

How times change.

Recent studies show that letting your mind wander can increase creativity and help your brain make connections between thoughts that stood alone previously, and unstick those wheels of happiness and progress.

Carrie Norton and Jessica Nordskog, co-owners of Wonder, an idea generation company, were in this stuck place. Both felt shackled by the golden handcuffs of the corporate world, but were unsure of where to go next.

“We would just naturally get together and brainstorm ideas of how to have our own business,” says Norton. “We had so many ideas that it dawned on us that maybe that’s what we’re good at...brainstorming.”

Now, the “Wonder Women” offer ideas and their own creative minds to brainstorm product names, business names, menu items and more for entrepreneurs.

Whether you’re brainstorming for business, or to make a shift in your personal life, Norton says it all starts with questions.

“There are so many what ifs when you start question-

ing where you want to be,” she says. “Shift it to what is happening right now. If you’re constantly thinking ahead or stuck in the past, you’re not going to realize the changes you need to make.”

As you start answering those questions, enjoy the process. Norton admits that she and Nordskog come up with some wacky ideas, but each one needs its moment to shine. Her advice: Don’t make it a rush job. Allow yourself to come up with as many ideas as possible.

When Norton has trouble letting go and generating ideas, she forces herself out of her element. Go for a walk, try something new, break up routines.

Then, once your brain begins wandering, try lessening the burden of remembering your ideas by jotting them down. By putting all the options on paper, Norton explains, it will open you up to thinking about new things. Then, decide to explore them in the moment, or later.

But most of all, don’t be afraid to put your head in the clouds and wander through the ideas that could make you happy. Let them be silly and impossible, then prioritize the ones that feel right and inject that happiness into your “right now.” —E.L.