

eBUBBLE*Life*

L a u g h • L o v e • L i v e

Your Authentic Lifestyle Magazine

43rd Edition

MIRROR MIRROR
on the wall! – who
is the one reigning
judgment on us all?

Diversity in
your EXERCISE
PROGRAM

Diversifying
your sexual
menu beyond
VANILLA SEX

Why you should
travel with
BABIES and
TODDLERS

CLOTHING – less
is the new black

AVENUES in
diversity

Compostable
CHRISTMAS

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DIVERSITY

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Editors Scribbles



what they need. Who are negligent in providing for and protecting the community as a whole as a commune.

We devote this issue to all of those people who have been affected by this continued act of vanity. From the oppressed to all of those who have and are losing loved one in this selfish slaughter. E-Bubble Life is not and never will be a canvas for political views, rhetoric, or propaganda. We love people and care what happens to the inhabitants of this one earth! So Should You.

We wish to pass onto you seasoned greetings, and hope that the insanity of the world will soon end so all people can live in peace.

Merry Christmas

Please enjoy this edition, any comments or feedback is appreciated, please forward through to admin@bubblemuffin.com

Keep looking after yourself, your family and friends, eat healthy and exercise daily.

Laugh, Love, Live
Kevin Kapusi Starow

As we head to the end of 2022, take some time to think back and congratulate yourself for surviving what this year has thrown up. From our own personal experiences to changes in the weather, political turmoils and the devastation of war.

Many families will be without loved ones, and will be experiencing deprivations for no fault of their own. Just because selfish, weak, old people want what is not theirs, who want more than what they have more than

Contributors



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Contributors



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Susie Taaffe is an entrepreneur, engineer, single mum of three who is passionate about small business and helping women to feel amazing every day.



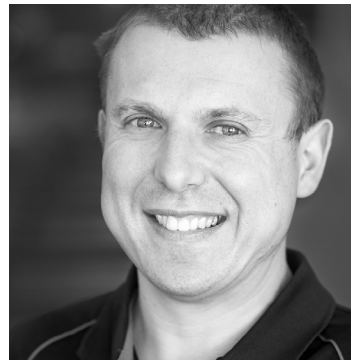
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AVENUES IN DIVERSITY



Have you ever been in a room full of friends to discuss what diversity is to them? You may hear: Diversity subjects ranging from race, age, culture, emotions, qualities, differences, to similarities. But it doesn't cover governments censoring our words, thoughts, genders, or social backgrounds. ⁽¹⁾

Inside a room of insane people, a sane person will appear insane.

Not all diversity is good. For instance: what if we're not in favor of boys and girls sharing bathrooms, men competing in women's sports, OR pretending we don't know what a woman is? Does anyone realize the ramifications of saying there are no differences between a woman and a man? First, the pharmaceutical and science industries would not be allowed to study individualities that are found within each sex.

So, what universe do we live in? Is one operating in reality or the Metaverse? Is it a place where you decide what reality is? Is it public policy to have decided that an artificial reality is preferable to the actual one? The way to influence anything in this universe is through thoughts because the mental universe is a universe of mind. My next question would be, why would governments want to censor thoughts or make it a crime to think differently? ⁽²⁾

Nonetheless, there are crazies with an agenda, redefining

our dictionary, calling out racism for sharing these thoughts only to find they are the real racists.

THOUGHTS ON COGNITIVE & EXPERIENTIAL DIVERSITY

Cognitive diversity attracts like minds to complement our thinking.⁽³⁾ Experiential diversity is based on life experiences that shape our emotional universe.

WHAT HARMS COGNITIVE DIVERSITY?

"The safety of human exposure to an ever-increasing number and diversity of electromagnetic field sources both at work and at home has become a public health issue. To date, many in vivo and in vitro studies have revealed that EMF exposure can alter cellular homeostasis, endocrine function, reproductive function, and more."⁽⁴⁾ Symptoms of EMF pollution in the brain include but are not limited to blocking electrical integrity, increasing anxiety and mental stress, difficulty sleeping, difficulty focusing, and fatigue. ⁽⁵⁾

WHAT CONCERNS DO WE FACE IN EXPERIMENTAL DIVERSITY?

In the U.S. we offer puberty blockers and genital removal surgery for 5 year olds and adolescent children. ⁽⁶⁾ Sex differences are seen in mental health problems that arise during this time, with disproportionate increases in



rates of anxiety and depression in girls and an increased prevalence of substance abuse and externalizing disorders in boys.⁽⁷⁾

Emotional and physical trauma can be the worse thing to endure as a child. Yet, according to the Department of Psychology at Northeastern University, it's vital to study emotional diversity by the expressions on faces.⁽⁸⁾ Seriously, is this study on cultural sensitivity - insensitive?

There are differences and similarities between various cultures as a whole, including family values, finances, religion, and more. In cultural diversity, I've seen 20 year olds share ideas surrounding the history of a country's politics. Diversity is not about destroying a country's history, yet the U.S. has participated in these acts. Additionally, "the lack of cultural and linguistic diversity in Australian politics has been apparent for years."⁽⁹⁾ Diversity is not about division or separation. However, there is an illusionary world in an alternate reality deciding their take on diversity. Diversity is not about the easy digestion of criminals crossing our borders daily, where drug lords and traffickers of women and girls account for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry.⁽¹⁰⁾ Yet, we're not supposed to talk about it.

Politicians spend billions in dark money to try to control the world. Look at the many avenues played just with diversity! We're in a flawed system with a poor plan using the wrong tools. We celebrate anti-life, anti-family,

and anti-white, chemically castrating children under the guise of "pathological altruism" where extremism is implanted in our minds and fear is found in every corner of our existence.⁽¹¹⁾ People who choose violent acts in our cities for some "ideological cause" and burn our small businesses - devalue diversity, human life, and their brains, increasing the risk of never attaining psychological normalcy or physical safety ever again. Propaganda feeds our thoughts and determines what is being absorbed in our cells. Health issues no longer separate the young from the elderly. We accumulate knowledge, but we've lost wisdom.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

In my observation, acts against humanity only exist with a malfunctioning brain. Keep your brain healthy!

Scholars with healthy brains in diverse groups can unite us all, reducing false narratives, censorship and criminal activities.

In group surroundings, it's possible to develop stronger team voices to make the world a better place. I believe this because, in the human body cells similar in structure tend to group themselves together and form tissues.⁽¹²⁾ Similarly, in human nature, we can group our thoughts together to protect and respect 'life itself' and create experiences we are proud to share with our children.

According to Dr. Daniel Amen, "our brain is the most amazing organ in the universe." Let's use it!

"Truth is, we are highly intelligent entities walking this planet." Stop buying into the ideas that don't resonate with reality.

Diversity includes connection and making our country safe again.

Written by [Connie Rogers](#)

Footnotes

- 1- [youtube.com/watch?v=Cp7QTZxYD3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cp7QTZxYD3s)
- 2- [youtube.com/watch?v=bwErp9QEYqE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwErp9QEYqE)
- 3- <https://hbr.org/2018/05/the-3-types-of-diversity-that-shape-our-identities>
- 4- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3341445/>
- 5- <https://ehtrust.org/environmental-effects-of-wireless-radiation-and-electromagnetic-fields/>
- 6- youtu.be/ljimp0e10Fs see also dailyfetched.com/tucker-carlson-blasts-hospitals-performing-horrifying-experiments-on-children/
- 7- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10576297/> see also <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9483683/>
- 8- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6099968/>
- 9- <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/australian-politics-should-be-diverse-its-people>
- 10- <https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/human-trafficking>
- 11- see youtu.be/YTCJHxv4jMA see also <https://academic.oup.com/book/3522?login=false>
- 12- <https://training.seer.cancer.gov/disease/categories/tissues.html>

Diversify your thinking – ENRICH YOUR LIFE



distracted, but at some point you told yourself that you were not good at maths and so you adopted that belief. Whenever the topic of maths, or any other belief you have about yourself based on the past arises – there you are, fixed in that belief. The remedy for fixed thinking is a growth mindset, recognising that just because something happened in the past, doesn't automatically mean it will continue to happen in the future. This applies to relationships, work performance as well as health.

How do you change rigid thinking?

To change rigid thinking, you must open up to possibilities, and this is easily achieved by adding one word to your vocabulary, the word “yet”. I am not good at maths “yet”. I haven't found true love “yet”. I don't enjoy my career “yet”. Adding the word yet opens your mind to the possibility that it can and will happen in the future, you just haven't found the right person, place, time, approach, method, yet. Whilst fixed thinking is a great way to reference what has happened in the past, being able to also look at the possibility of how things can change, offers fuel for your growth and development.

BLACK & WHITE

Also known as binary and either/or thinking, it is a way of seeing your options as being limited to just two. It's a problem because it creates an internal pressure to decide between two options only, like should I go to dinner with them or not. Should I take the job or not, should I leave, or not. Black and white thinking is a great way to narrow the options when you are experiencing overwhelm, but if both options have limitations that won't work well for you, you will find yourself feeling restricted. And what's worse, whichever option you do choose will inevitably lead to resentment and/or regret. For example, you have the opportunity to travel, but it means you will have to stop working and you worry that it might lead to losing your job and not having the money to pay for your trip when you return. Either/or thinking sounds like “do I go, or not.”

How do you stop black & white thinking?

The remedy to binary thinking is to take a step back and consider all your options; this is called options thinking. Write them all out, explore them as a collective, resisting the temptation to distil the options down into just two! It is possible to explore all the options and create the optimised outcome, for example it might be possible to change jobs so you can work whilst you travel. Speaking to your employer, you might share your

Most people know the benefits of living with diversity in our community; the richness that comes with experiencing different foods, philosophies, and ways of interpreting the world and what it means to us. When our community is limited to the same people, the same cultures, and the same thinking, we run the risk of our world view narrowing, restricted by fixed ideas and ways of thinking. When your thinking becomes too habituated and you can find ourselves feeling stuck and rigid, especially in the face of problem solving and dealing with conflict in relationships.

In my coaching practice, I see 5 common thinking patterns that keep people stuck. And the solutions to the problems is not so much in the problem itself, but in diversifying your thinking style, you have greater flexibility to change your patterns and change your life. Here are the five thinking styles that can change with diversified thinking...

FIXED THINKING

Fixed thinking is the ultimate form of rigid thinking. It looks like seeing things the way that they have always been and not being able to see what is actually going on at this moment. It might be that you weren't great at maths when you were at school. Perhaps you had a teacher that wasn't a good fit for you, or you were easily

situation and ask them what assurances they can give you about your job security in the event of taking leave for travel. There might be an opportunity to work at your travel destination. If every option is a colour in the rainbow, then moving out of black and white thinking into colourful option thinking will allow you to think outside the square.

PERFECTIONISTIC THINKING

There's nothing wrong with doing things well and taking pride in what you do, but when perfectionistic thinking has you obsessing and unable to let it go, it can feel exhausting. Perfectionist thinking is born out of the need to reform, optimise and do what's right, but it's often driven by a fear of making a mistake and getting things wrong. This makes it incredibly time consuming, especially when perfectionism can cause anxiety and lead to procrastination, "If I can't do it perfectly, then I'd rather avoid doing it altogether". Diversifying the way you approach perfectionistic thinking will reduce angst. Here's how...

How to overcome perfectionistic thinking?

Take a step back and consider everything that you need to achieve within your day, week, month. Instead of focusing on perfectionism, focus on prioritising what is important to you. Recognise that everything has an opportunity cost and if you are investing too much time on one thing, other things will suffer. Allocate time to each task and focus on maximising your impact during that time, to just get it done. Lower your standards – yep, you read right. If you have high expectations for the outcome, you will keep striving to improve what isn't good enough yet. If your expectations are low, once you have reached them, you can acknowledge the achievements and move on.

PROBLEM FOCUSED THINKING

It's a super power to be able to anticipate problems because it gives you the ability to avoid them or manage them before they get out of hand. But when problem focused thinking is your go to thinking style, it can feel draining to always be seeing the problems and it can bring the energy down when spending time with friends and exploring ideas, dreams and aspirations. Problem focused thinking sounds like "Yes but the problem with that is..." Problem focused thinking is a kill-joy because it narrows your world view to see what isn't working well and how that creates pain and suffering. Very fortunately, the solution to problem focused thinking is straight forward.

How to change problem focused thinking?

The remedy to problem focused thinking is flipping your focus to solution focused thinking, where you prioritise the outcome you'd like to see, channelling your energy into creating what you prefer. Solution based thinking sounds like, "Interesting, so how would that work?" rather than "The problem with that is..." Sometimes known as goal-oriented thinking, these two styles of thinking together



give you the ability to recognise problems but also focus on solutions that take you away from the problem, rather than just getting stuck there in the problem.

DISCOUNTING THINKING

Everything in life has value. You, your relationships, your work, and your hobbies. When you discount the value of those things, it can sound like "I'm just a secretary." "I only dabble in singing." "I'm not very good." "that's ok, it's not important, it's only...". When you habitually fall into discounted thinking, you reduce your value and that of others. You will experience feelings of not being good enough, perpetuating a focus on what is lacking or less than. It undermines self-esteem, which may be the cause of discounted thinking in the first place. Perfectionistic thinking and discounted thinking can often hang out together. This can look like a glass being half empty approach to life. Because our brains work on a bio feedback loop, what we believe is what we will see in the world and what we see in the world reinforces what we believe, diversify this thinking style is important.

How to diversify discounted thinking?

Diversifying your thinking to include what is good and what is abundant is the remedy to discounted thinking. Look for your value, count it. Look for what is good and working well, count it. Start a gratitude journal to capture all the things in life that you are grateful for, including the quirks of others at work and home.

Diversifying your thinking not only enriches your life, but that of others. When you can recognise rigid and inflexible thinking within yourself and you can be more flexible, it will impact the ways that other people experience you. Just as you start to recognise these thinking styles within yourself, you will start to see them in others. It's a great way to start a conversation about diversified thinking, but its also really important to be kind and compassionate, so your new ideas don't come across as judgemental or critical. We are all doing our best at this human experience of life. It's not a competition – we are in it together.

Written by [Tania Burgess](#)

Diversity in your exercise program

If you're a runner, it's easy to do the same thing every time for your exercise program, go for a run. If you like doing Pilates classes, it's easy to do the same class on Tuesdays and Fridays at 6pm and feel that you have done your exercise for the week. But is it effective? Are you really getting the benefit you think you are getting from your exercise program or can you be getting better outcomes, faster?



The answer is you can do better and the method is through diversity.

There are two major elements to an exercise program that makes it effective and this can't be achieved if you do the same thing, week in, week out.

Firstly, there must be an element of progressive overload. When you exercise, especially for the first time, you are doing an activity that is more than the body is usually used to. As a result, under the surface, your nervous system receives new stimulation that causes it to form new motor patterns in the brain and nerve ending connections within the nerves. In the muscles, there are minor tears that your body repairs to make you a little bit stronger than you were before you started exercising. However, if you don't slowly increase your load as you continue to exercise, your body can easily cope with the activity level so has no need to adapt further and results will easily plateau.

The key is to slowly and steadily, increase your exercise

load every time (a bit heavier, a bit faster, a bit further) in order to give the body a reason to adapt and continuously progress and improve.

Secondly, the elements of the exercise program are extremely important and this is where diversity has the most impact.

STRENGTH TRAINING

This should be a foundational element of any exercise program, no matter if you want to be a great runner, a triathlete, a netball player or just be strong and healthy for life.

For many years, the importance of strength has been underestimated and we now know that all sports people need regular strength training as long as they wish to participate in any sport.

Strength training provide support for the joints and allows the muscles to take on the load required for sport and everyday life activities. If muscles are not strong enough, you will find that tasks are just harder than they should be and you risk injury as they provide protection and support of the joints.

In addition, strength training stimulates activity of the bone forming cells in the body, the osteoblasts and is extremely important for improving and maintaining bone density throughout the lifespan.



Strength training also:

- Improves the metabolism and management of normal blood glucose levels
- One element you can control in improving brain function
- Is extremely important in managing and maintaining your weight by raising your basal metabolic rate

A good, structured strength training program, twice a week that is progressively overloaded and adjusted is a great foundation of anyone's fitness routine.

**CARDIO TRAINING**

Cardio training is the key to improving your heart health and your fitness level. This is more than just going for a gentle walk or jogging at a comfortable pace, but pushing yourself so that you are somewhat puffed during your workout so that you struggle to maintain a conversation during exercise.

Just like strength training, cardio training needs to be targeted and specific to be effective. Interval training that works you at your:

- **Aerobic threshold** – The point at which you can no longer fully breakdown glucose in your muscles and lactate starts to accumulate in your blood stream. This point occurs when you struggle to exercise and have a conversation with your workout buddy. Running or cycling for bursts at this level for a few minutes at a time helps you challenge and work at your aerobic threshold and gives you time to recover for the next round.
- **Anerobic threshold** – At this point, you can no longer maintain a steady level of lactate in your bloodstream and you will struggle to say more than one or two words without taking a breath. This kind of training aims to push and improve your aerobic threshold, giving you that explosive speed.

However, just like strength training, progressive overload

is important. Building on your training by adding one more interval or a bit faster each time will help improve your fitness level with a steady improvement in performance.

If this is overwhelming, it is a great time to get the advice of a qualified exercise professional or running coach.

POWER TRAINING AND PLYOMETRICS

The next level of performance is achieved with power training and plyometrics. This involves using your muscles as explosive springs, such as jumping, bounding and hopping. Power training is the speed element of strength training and is extremely important for fast paced sports such as AFL, netball, soccer and rugby.

However, this kind of training puts an extreme load on the muscles, tendons and joints and must with done only when you have built an excellent based of strength and strength training continues to be part of your program.

If you are to undertaking power training, I strongly recommend this is performed under the supervision of a qualified exercise professional or strength and conditioning coach.

LIGHT EXERCISE

Exercise doesn't just have to be hard and fast to be effective, but the strategic mixing of light exercise is very important for a complete and well balance exercise program. After a hard workout day of strength and cardio training, a light training session (that is performed at a conversational pace) is important for recovery.

When you do hard exercise, the body and muscles are stimulated and there is some breakdown that occurs. Your natural cortisol levels (a natural stress hormone) rises and a muscle breakdown by-product (creatine kinase) increases in the blood.

Light exercise gives your body time to recover, reduces your cortisol levels and aids in the breakdown and reduction of creatine kinase in your bloodstream. Adding light exercise, such as a gentle walk, speeds up your recovery and allows you to train harder and more effectively in your next training session.

In addition, if you are aiming to lose weight, light training allows you to burn more energy without compromising your recovery and raising your cortisol levels (prolonged raised cortisol affects your glucose metabolism and retains your body fat).

Diversity in exercise is not just a nice way of mixing up your program, but an essential part of progress and achieving your desired outcomes from your training program.

Written by [Michael Dermansky](#)

COMPANION PLANTING



We all want companionship. Life is just better with someone else around.

Finding the right person to do life with can happen quite by accident for some, but for others it's more by design. Finding a soulmate or a workmate makes life fun, easier, productive and simply more enjoyable. But when we find ourselves "stuck" with someone who rubs us up the wrong way, then life can become complicated and difficult.

And so it is within the plant world. Who'd have thought that plants would have "friends"? Perhaps not friends as we know them, but certainly plants live best in community. When planted with species they get along with, certain plants will thrive and bear fruit. They start living their best lives together.

Similarly, plants have distinct dislikes for some species - plants that will hinder their growth and make their life difficult.

Haven't we all been there with someone like that in a workplace, family or community setting too!!

Here's how to keep your veggie plants thriving by finding the best companion plants for them, so they produce more and avoid some of the pests that hinder their growth.

How companion planting works

Companion planting works on 3 main principles: nutrient compatibility to promote growth, attracting beneficials into the garden for pest control and repelling unwanted pests away. Let's dig deeper and see how the different principles work and what companion plants are best for each.

NUTRIENT COMPATIBILITY TO PROMOTE PLANT GROWTH

When growing vegetables, it's good practice to group our plants for crop rotation. This means growing things for their leaves, or for their roots or for their fruit.

To promote lots of healthy leaves, we ensure plenty of nitrogen is made available for plants to keep growing leaves. We can give them high nitrogen fertilisers like chicken manure. When we plant lots of leafy crops together, we can give them all the right fertiliser. Some of our leafy companions are silverbeet, lettuce, cabbage and herbs.

Nitrogen is also made available in the soil naturally by legumes. Legumes are plants that produce pods and they have a pretty nifty way of helping plants around them to grow. Legumes take oxygen in the soil and convert it into a form of nitrogen that is immediately available for plants to take up through their roots with the aid of microbes in the soil. So legumes make good companions with leafy crops. Now you can plant your beans (legumes) with your lettuces or your peas (legumes) with your cabbages.

THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

We might subscribe to the notion that positive thoughts and actions bring about positive experiences in our lives, so how does this work in the plant world and how does it influence companion planting?

There are certain creatures that protect our plants and bring particular benefits for our veggies and productive crops through natural means of pest control. These are

pollinators, predators and parasites.

Pollinators are helpful to increase our harvest rates. If you aren't getting as many pumpkins from your pumpkin vines as you would like, then maybe you don't have enough pollinators visiting your pumpkin flowers. Pollinators are insects like bees, butterflies and beetles.

Most of our vegetable plants and fruit trees are pollinated by bees. Bees feed on pollen and nectar that are found in flowers. However, insects have a much better sense of smell than sight, so they can only hone in on the scent of a flower when they are near it. Plants have adapted to attract pollinators through showy colourful flowers or special features on their flowers to try and grab the attention of any passing pollinators to flag them down.

Bees see colour differently from us and are able to see on the ultraviolet spectrum (unlike us). Ultraviolet patterns can act as a landing zone, showing bees where to land on a flower, rather than bright colours. Their photoreceptors make them attuned to green, blue and violet. So if you want to attract more bees to pollinate your pumpkins, you should be including some blue, violet or purple coloured flowers as your companion plants. Try a combination of blue sage, purple salvia and borage with pumpkins and zucchinis.

Natural **predators** are beneficial in the veggie garden because they will control pests naturally by feeding on soft pests like aphids. Natural predators are birds, lizards, frogs, lady birds, lacewing and praying mantis. These



creatures need food, water and habitat in your garden if you want them to be regular visitors.

Small predators will feed on pollen from small flowers. Large predators will feed on pollen and nectar from large flowers. No single companion plant is going to provide all this for all predators, so plant a variety of flowering companion plants with a range of flower colour, size and shape.

Parasites might sound awful but nature is sometimes quite vicious in the way she feeds the various levels and links within the food chain. Parasitic wasps are of great value in the veggie garden because they select other insects as fodder to feed their own young larvae.

I remember watching a parasitic paper wasp drag a grub from my tomato plant and take it back to its nest. Other wasps will parasitise a grub in situ by laying its eggs onto the actual grub. Cabbage grubs can be controlled in this manner.

Try combining companion plants like flowering alyssum and catnip near your cabbage patch to help you grow great cabbages, broccoli and cauliflower.

REPEL THE UNWANTED GUEST

I found myself out of luck whilst backpacking around Europe once when we had failed to book accommodation ahead. We had to suffice with the only beds available at the time, in a hostel filled with bunks of sweaty, weary tourists. The stench of sweaty bodies and rotten socks was enough for me to stay there for the shortest time possible, getting the least amount of sleep to function so I could get out of that place as quickly as I could. It was disgusting!!

That's how you can treat the unwanted guest that arrives in your garden - stink them out!!

I mentioned above that insects have much more acute sense of smell than sight, so if you can confuse pests with mixed smells or scents then it seems to work to repel them and keep them away from your vegetable garden.

So companion planting should not only involve planting flowers, but also include strong smelling plants like herbs and plants with scented foliage. Try planting sage and marigold around your tomatoes and place pots of mint in with your cabbages and see the difference it makes.

Companion planting for organic gardening

Good organic gardens employ many natural techniques and strategies for producing pest-free veggies. Companion planting is one such technique and should be used along with other organic gardening strategies for best results.

You can learn more about companion planting, crop rotation and natural pest control in my Backyard Veggies online course.

Written by [Toni Salter](#)



CLOTHING – less is the new black

Clothing: we all need it, but at what cost?

Clothing is an essential daily item because, well, if we ventured outdoors without clothing we'd be arrested. It's also a way to express ourselves as individuals. We can tell so much about a person by the clothes they wear. But our quest to be fashionable comes at a cost. Not only a financial cost to us, but also an environmental cost. It makes sense then when we are on our journey to a lighter, eco friendly lifestyle, our clothing purchases need to be reviewed or dare I say, scaled back.

I'm extremely grateful that so many of us pass our old clothing on to op shops. But you only need to visit an op shop (or a tip shop for other items) to see how much is already in existence. So, we need to become more conscious about our shopping habits to reduce our contribution to the existing excess. Purchasing on a whim, because it's on sale, or because "I might wear it" will only cause distress down the track. I know, I've been there. Or, my famous excuse, "I just need to lose a few kilos and I'll fit into this". We know retail shopping is a therapy of sorts, that fulfills an immediate need. But creates other issues when our wardrobe is bursting at the seams.

Some 70% of all clothing that is manufactured ends up in landfill. What a waste. Not only for the physical item itself, but the waste of manufacturing time and labour costs, the creation of the material to make the garment, the water usage, dyes and chemicals. Most clothing unfortunately is made overseas so there are also the shipping costs (both financial and environmental) as well to consider. The costs we don't see that goes into making up the finished garment all has an environmental impact.

I made a decision a long time ago to reduce my purchasing of new garments. My lifestyle was changing, and it simply didn't warrant spending hundreds of dollars each month on new clothing. These days its such a rarity to purchase new.

My fave thing to do is op shop shopping for a range of reasons. There are all sorts of goodies there that are just waiting for another life cycle. There are so many pieces of brand-new clothing still with tags on. Great linen pieces from past designers that I've adored, all to be allocated space in my wardrobe.



Most of my clothing is from op shops. I would say 95% of my wardrobe. Not only am I saving on \$\$ but I'm giving life to clothing that otherwise may end up in landfill. I have recently found an independent op shop in a nearby town that has quickly become a firm fave of mine. On my last visit I purchased a lovely linen summer top/dress for \$2.50. It was in perfect condition and looked as though it had hardly been worn. My initial intention was to use it in another sewing project (more on that in a minute) but when I got it home, I decided it was too good to chop up, and I'd get some wear out of it first. My future plans for this garment will give it another life cycle once I'm finished wearing it.

I also like to sew my own clothes. It's something I am aiming to increase in the future. It's a great way to put your own creative stamp on your wardrobe. On a recent day trip to metropolitan Melbourne, I had some time to kill so I took a rare wander through the shopping centre. I liked what I saw when I visited a women's clothing store and I had an impulsive thought, "that's such a lovely colour green, splash out and make a purchase". However, there were simply racks and racks of the same clothing. Individualism is dead. My heart sank. Many of these items are designed to wear for the season, then discard in favour of new fashion trends next summer. So, tap into your inner fashionista and create your own beautiful wardrobe.

VISIBLE MENDING

There are a couple of ways though to repurpose your wardrobe items. Visible mending is trending. If you have a fave piece of clothing that has a hole or tear in it, instead of trying to fix the hole so nobody can see it, make a feature of it instead. You can use eye catching contrasting threads to make a feature of the repair. Jeans in particular lend itself to visible mending. Many clothing designers have already embraced this feature. (I suggest a quick internet search for designer jeans that have been 'visibly mended' and see how much for which they sell!) A search in the book section of your local op shop will provide you with so many ideas you'll want to drop everything and sit and sew.

SLOW STITCHING

My other favourite reason to shop at op shops is to seek out fabrics to fulfill my newfound love of slow stitching. Although it is the art of creating beautiful pieces, I also look at it as a form of therapy. It forces me to sit and relax whilst creating individual pieces. Slow stitching is growing in momentum and several books have been written on the subject.

Your own wardrobe is a great place to start when searching for some visible mending projects, or to cut up and use in your slow stitching projects. There will be items in there that you haven't worn for years but you haven't thrown out ...

- that garment that cost a week's wages
- a precious piece given to you by a loved one
- the dress you wore when you met your Mr Forever
- the old shirt that has seen better days, not good enough to send to the op shop, but too good to throw out.

These all get new life breathed into them by being repurposed. What I love about repurposing our own clothes is that we get to enjoy them again in another form. Clothing items from family members can also help create a beautiful heirloom piece, such as a quilt that can be handed down through the generations. Buttons, zippers, bows, press studs, elastics and any other accessories can also be repurposed. I've added spare buttons to some quilts I have made from scrap fabrics.

If, at the end of your wardrobe cull, you find you have garments that have no further use to you or anybody else, please donate to Upparel, who are revolutionising the textile industry and saving so much apparel going to landfill. There is also a very sobering video on their website on how much clothing ends up in landfill.

Happy wardrobe slaying.

Written by [Liz O'Dwyer](#)

MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL! – Who is the one reigning judgment on us all?

People judge others in order to make themselves feel better about themselves. Like a hierarchical pecking order which is relentless and exhausting. But are they really judging others or is it actually a cry for how small they feel about themselves? How do we open our arms and accept people for who they are? I believe, the answer lies firstly in our own self-acceptance. If we are not capable of accepting ourselves as we are, we have Buckley's chance of accepting anyone else!! And the reign of judgment continues on and on.

WHO ARE YOU?

Firstly, who arrrrrrrrre you? This phrase always reminds me of the caterpillar in Alice in Wonderland who is asking Alice this question. Alice has changed so many times that day and been to so many strange places and met lots of crazy characters and she is quite confused and does not know how to answer his question. Let us look inwards at ourselves – who are you? We are so caught up in all our titles, but they are not actually who you are. Yes, you are a mother, daughter, doctor, nurse, engineer, musician, or whatever title you have classified yourself as. But they are not WHO you are. They are what you do. We need to look further past this and into our soul at its core. Who is that person? What do they love? What do they need? It can be quite confusing at first because if you take away all those identifying things, what is left?? Not much.

WE WERE ALL CHILDREN ONCE

I want you to close your eyes and picture yourself when you were a child. Whatever age comes to your mind. Do you hate that child? Do you criticize that child? Or do you feel tender affection and love for them? Now ask that child what it is they need. When I first did this exercise, it brought me instantly to tears. All my child wanted was to be loved and hugged. To be told they were important and mattered. That child is still within you now and still needs the same things. To feel validated, supported, and loved.

The famous Burning Man Sculpture depicts two people with their backs turned away from each other. The inner child of each person is standing looking at each other, desperate for connection and acceptance. I believe this is the key to accepting others exactly as they are. Look past



their external characteristics and behaviours and see the lonely child inside. To feel compassion and empathy for ourselves and others.

Why is this important? I have a recurring theme with my friends and my children lately. Someone is perceived to be mean to them. The advice I give every time is the same and I ask you the same question. Do people that are feeling great in their inner world walk around making peoples' lives miserable? No, they do not. They are too busy feeling fabulous. Remember when someone



says something or does something that isn't very nice, it actually has nothing to do with you! It reflects their own inner world. And I'm guessing they don't have a lot of self-love and acceptance happening! The next question is – can we change them? Definitely not! As I say to my kids – stay in your lane and work on who you are. Be kind and true to yourself and then these people's opinions of you will not matter.

I had a very wise friend who was always the MC at events, and I asked her how she was so brave to talk in front of everyone with so much confidence. She said she had two mantras she repeated to herself. Firstly, I am a kind and caring person and secondly, their opinion of me is none of my business. I was blown away at how simple these phrases were, yet so true. The only opinion of you that matters is your own. If you treat other people in a kind and caring way, then even if others don't reciprocate, you know you are staying true to who you are. Well, that is if you wish to be a kind and caring human!

CURATE YOUR CONTENT

Self-acceptance is becoming an increasingly popular trend in social media and there are so many positive people sending out constructive messaging around this.

Influencers of all body types and pronouns can now be followed and I seriously suggest doing a thorough clean-up of your social media and only keeping the uplifting content. These influencers are publicly talking about their fears and insecurities and how they consciously choose to love and accept themselves exactly as they are. By doing so, they are giving you permission to do the same. As we mentioned before, when we can accept ourselves then we can accept others for who they are.

There is a reason that people who have severe disfigurements from birth or disastrous accidents often go on to become motivational speakers. They are the epitome of having had to accept themselves as they are, and their encouragement is for you to do the same for yourself. They put life back into perspective.

LET'S CALL BS

Enough is enough! We have been brainwashed by huge marketing companies with huge budgets for as long as I can remember. Social media now allows normal people to call BS on photoshopped content which has fed us unrealistic beauty standards. There still is a dirty, dark side to social media but if you monitor your content carefully then you can avoid seeing fake, filtered pictures. If something makes you feel bad about yourself, whatever it is, GET RID OF IT!

I find it particularly useful if you can find some influencers that are talking about the same insecurities you have, with the same body shape. They will give you curated content that matches how you feel and will lift you up!

FASHION FINDS

These days influencers have completely shifted the way that we buy things, with fashion being one of their biggest offerings. The easiest way to shop for your body shape without leaving the house is to follow influencers that you look like! Use them as your personal shoppers and you can cut through all the fashion noise much faster.

There is a whole range of price points too – some influencers specialize in cheaper Kmart try-ons whilst others try on a variety of price point from Zara to designer. You know what you like when you see it and think oh, but I could never wear that. Well, follow people where that statement is not true. Actively seek them out.

LET'S GO!

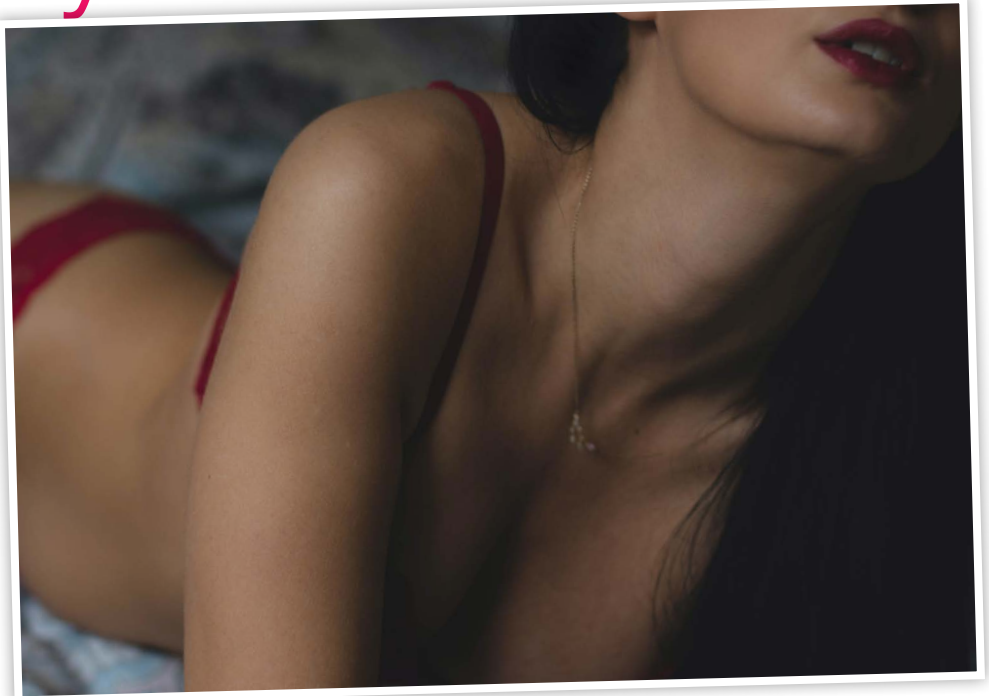
Overall, if you are in a place of love and acceptance of yourself it becomes easy to open your arms and accept others exactly as they are. Happy people don't look for flaws in others because they don't need to others down in order to feel good! Stay in your own lane, do the things that fulfill you and make your soul sing with joy. If we all did this, the world would be a much happier place!

Written by [Susie Taaffe](#)

Diversifying your sexual menu beyond vanilla sex

There are a wide range of activities that fall under the sexual umbrella, and diversity in the space of sex and wellness is an important part of keeping your relationship refreshed and keeping that ‘spark’ we hear so much about, alive. While vanilla sex certainly has a time and place, changing things up can keep things hot and add greater intimacy for you and your sexual partner.

Diversifying your sex life doesn't mean you need to be having sex with different people or attending swingers' parties (unless you want to of course!). It can be as big or small a change as you, and your partner(s) feel comfortable with. As with any sexual activity, communication and consent is essential.



CHANGING UP POSITIONS

Trying out new and kinky sex positions is a fun and easy way to broaden your sexual repertoire. While missionary can be great, there are many options out there which can add to your experience. Start off with some classics like doggy, or cowgirl, and as you get more confident you can get more ambitious. Remember, sex is all about fun and pleasure, and you might try positions that don't quite work out – but that's okay – you and your partner can have a laugh about it and enjoy experimenting together. If you want some **new sex positions to try**, Lovehoney has a section on their blog dedicated to sex positions and publish a 'Position of the Week' – why not set a challenge with your partner to try the weekly position? Otherwise, you could invest in some sex position card games or have a browse online for more ideas.

TRY SOME ROLE PLAY

Exploring your fantasies and giving your sexual desires a platform is an important part of any sexual relationship. Why not branch out and introduce your desires in the form of role play? It could be a naughty nurse and patient, a sexy fireman or giving each other roles of a dom and sub. Whatever it is, share your fantasy with your partner and work together to see how you can bring them to life, while keeping within both of your sexual boundaries.

INTRODUCE TOYS

Sex toys should be considered as a fun addition to sex – they are a great way to experience new sensations in the bedroom. There's a huge range available designed to stimulate different body parts, some realistic and some not. I recommend hopping online and looking through sites like Lovehoney to see what you and your partner are interested in. It might be internal or external stimulation, something that vibrates, something that sucks, warms or gyrates.

EXPERIMENT WITH BONDAGE

Handcuffs, blindfolds and spankers can all be fun additions to the bedroom, and used to diversify positions and roles within the bedroom. One of my favourite ways to mix things up with bondage is experimenting with sensory deprivation – it can be really hot!

SEX ON LOCATION

Most of us get into the routine of having sex at the same time, in the same place (vanilla sex). Something as simple as having sex in the morning rather than the evening, in the kitchen rather than the bedroom or checking into a hotel for the night can be a great way of mixing up our routines. Also think about how you usually start sexual play - could you start with something a little different or shuffle things around? How about adding in a foreplay game to keep you on your toes?

Written by [Chantelle Otten](#)

COMPOSTABLE CHRISTMAS

In Australia there is no point dreaming of a White Christmas when the temperatures soar and the air conditioners are cranking, so what I'm dreaming of this year is a Compostable Christmas. A Christmas that respects our Planet and its resources and reduces our reliance on single use plastics, glitter and sap happy greeting cards. Are you with me!

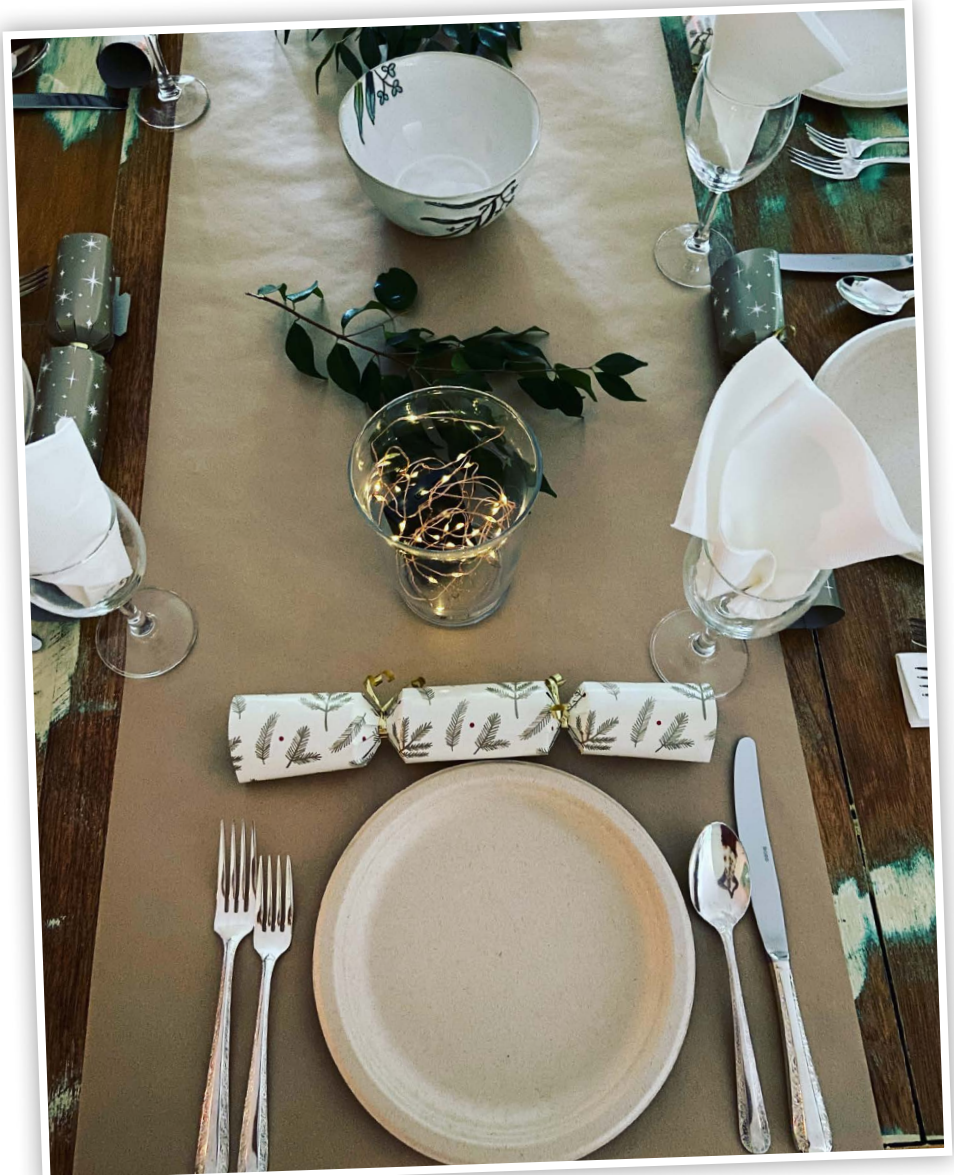
In our home in order to reduce our waste that goes into landfill we employ four different methods; recycling, reusing, worm farm and compost heap (yes its not really a proper bin method as yet, more like a dig a trench and bury it method). So last year I decided that when we had our fourteen family members over for Christmas lunch, that we would do things a little differently...

Since we had recently moved to acreage and were surrounded by the amazing bush in the Scenic Rim I chose to theme our Christmas as "An Aussie Bush Christmas" and to make it as environmentally friendly as possible. Every part of Christmas was planned out consciously using the Planet as my lens for the decisions I made.

Here are five of the things I did to make our Christmas as compostable as possible and I share these with you because I hope you may choose to use them this year with your family.

Best to start with a BIG bin and label it COMPOST so that your guests can make use of it on the day. After all, you don't expect them to take a shovel and bury their own compostable rubbish do you?

It's true, they may need a little educating to get this right, to separate out recyclables, reusables and general rubbish, but hey that's part of the role of an imperfect environmentalist, isn't it?



- 1. Brown paper packages** tied up with string... these are a few of my favourite things (sing it for me people!). Australians use over 150,000 kilometres of wrapping paper every Christmas. This is enough to wrap around the worlds equator nearly four times, and most of it is thrown into the general waste (landfill) bin because it's not compostable or recyclable. This is mainly because of the toxic dyes, glossy finish and glitter that all contribute to environmental pollution. Solution? You can buy brown craft paper on a roll that



is way cheaper by the metre than wrapping paper and is totally, 100% compostable. Wrap the parcel, write a message of good cheer right on the package and tie with hemp, jute or cotton twine maybe incorporating a sprig of rosemary or gum leaf and voila your wrapping is compostable!

If you are a bit crafty a few years back I made fabric sacks for all the Christmas presents. They looked amazing under the tree and once the frivolity of present opening died down they were folded up and put away in a box with the decorations for next year.

2. **I love my eclectic collection** of op shop bought plates but as the hostess on the day I certainly don't want to be stuck in the kitchen washing them up, so I opted for compostable plates. They are a perfect beige colour to go with my decor and are quite sturdy, particularly for a "sit down" meal. I draw the line at the disposable cutlery though and opt for the family silverware (which my darling Mum cleans and polishes each year) and real glassware because I can't abide single use plastics and am happy to stack glasses in the dishwasher. So compostable plates, bowls and side plates are a winner!
3. **Napkins** - While I have a selection of linen and cotton napkins they all seem to come in a four or six place setting NOT 14! So I went for compostable napkins as well. They suited the theme, very earthy, inexpensive and you can fold them into artistic shapes or tie with string and present with a sprig of bush foliage. At the end of the meal they just get buried in the ground with the rest of the compostable Christmas fare.
4. **Table decor** has changed for me over the years as I have been striving to become an imperfect environmentalist. Plastic baubles and wreaths have been replaced with decorations that are felted, tin, hessian, and last year I repurposed an old bamboo wreath, wove eucalyptus branches through it, added

a hand written banner and some tree bark to make it fit my bush Christmas theme and all of it was... you guessed it, compostable.

The table runners were the same brown craft paper strewn with lovely fronds of eucalypts from our garden, layered with the compostable plates topped with sustainable Christmas crackers, gleaming silverware, shiny glassware and napkins adorned with rosemary sprigs, my festive table was on theme and on point to leave a lighter foot print on the Planet.

5. **Christmas cards** like wrapping paper are nearly always shiny, printed with toxic dyes or sprinkled liberally with micro-plastic glitter so if you can they are best avoided. If you have to buy cards, look for ones made out of recycled paper printed with water soluble dyes and inks and free from glitter. These will be able to go in the recycling bin, worm farm (soak in water first) or compost bin.

According to statistics Australians waste output increases by 30% overall during the Christmas period, so anything you can do to reduce this will help our environmental impact.

Packaging, food waste and general consumption are the three main areas to address as a family, so being conscious as a consumer when you go Christmas shopping is the biggest takeaway. Before you put it in the trolley ask yourself these three questions; "do I really need it?", "where will this end up at the end of its useful life?", "is there a sustainable alternative?" My creative brain actually enjoys the challenge of seeking alternatives and thank fully many companies are now offering products that are more eco friendly, you may need to shop around a bit further or pay a little bit extra but I think the Planet is worth it? Don't you.

Wishing you all a very Merry Compostable Christmas.

Written by [Julia Schafer](#)

Why you should travel with babies and toddlers



With the holiday season approaching, it's easy to daydream about a sunny getaway or a long overdue family trip. But is it worth spending money on a holiday when you have young children who may not remember the experience?

Travelling with children can be daunting, particularly considering the cost, time, and effort. However, if you can make it work, you need not worry you are wasting your time or money. While children may not remember the trip specifically, travelling provides children with rich learning experiences, encourages family connection, and provides opportunities for personal growth and independence. All these reasons and more make it a valuable journey to embark on.

SPENDING QUALITY TIME AS A FAMILY

Taking time away from your everyday life can create a relaxed environment for caregivers to lay aside their worries and life commitments and enjoy moments focusing solely on their family. Taking time for laughter, fun, and creating memories is one of the best parts of the holiday season and something children and adults benefit from. What better reason is there to crank out the board games, set up the lawn ring toss, or get the firepit roaring?

EXPERIENCING NEW SURROUNDS

Momentarily exchanging your living situation for salty ocean air, fresh country landscapes, lush forests, whispering mountains, or wide-open desert is not only



good for the adult soul but also very exciting for young children. With brains soaking up life like a sponge, every experience enriches their childhood.

ENCOURAGE GROWTH AND INDEPENDENCE

The first five years of a child's life are pivotal developmentally. From the day they are born, babies are ready to learn, grow and develop at an incredible rate. The fastest rate of development children experience is within the first five years. Therefore varied experiences with family connections, sensory opportunities, new surroundings, and lots of love will enrich their early developmental process.

BECOME ADAPTABLE IN NEW ENVIRONMENTS

Resilience and adaptability are important skills to develop in childhood that will help throughout their life into adulthood. Travelling and staying in a new environment encourages adaptability with family support in a fun and meaningful way.

BROADEN HORIZONS AND DEVELOP A WIDER VIEW

Travelling for the holidays can help children understand there is a lot more to the world and their life than their direct day-to-day schedule and surroundings. Embracing new foods, cultures, and surroundings can be a fun experience for the whole family while also fundamentally learning valuable lessons about diversity.

CREATE TRADITIONS AND LASTING MEMORIES

Some of the best things about summer holidays are the seemingly endless time and space for children to enjoy independence and growth while creating lifelong memories. Fun activities such as kids club, adventures at the beach, meeting new friends, enjoying large family gatherings, and making their own fun in a new environment all contribute to creating lifelong memories.

Written by [Cerise Canon](#)

FEATURED INGREDIENT

Smoked Eel

My fondest memories as a child, as I have mentioned previously, centres mainly around foods and the people whom we shared our tables with. Smoked eel for me was a delicacy, even as a child, that strong umami taste, was satiating. Smoked eel on caraway seed, rye bread with dill pickled cucumbers, was to me, and is to me a mouth-watering experience.

I have many memories of uncle Peter, and his BBQ smoker with trap door in the chimney. Where he installed a few bars, upon which he could hang the dressed eels, allowing for a perfect smoking effect. Lets now take a little time to appreciate this animal, Eels are a long serpent looking fish reaching up to 4 metres long and weighing in at, in some cases over 25kg. That is huge! There are both freshwater and seawater varieties, though they all return to the sea eventually to breed.

HISTORY

Eels where in Medieval England more than just a food source, they were a commodity, a currency, they were part of the economy. It is reported that bills, rents would be paid in an agreed weight of these creatures. By the end of the 11th century a reported 540,000 eels would be used as barter per annum, just in England. This continued until an inevitable decline in the 16th century. Bundles of eels would be known as a denomination name, such as a group of ten was called a bind. Whilst a group of 25 was known as a stick, each having a value.

As a consequence of this protein being used as a currency, it would be useless once it spoiled. So salting, or more importantly smoking was the perfect way to extend the shelf life of the product, whilst maintaining its value. Not to mention there were seasons for this marine life, predominantly being caught in the autumn. As they migrated their way through the rivers of the land.

Reportedly, at this time, more eel was consumed than all freshwater or marine fish combined. This serpent looking water dwelling creature could be found everywhere throughout the land, and so was cheap and readily available. Simply eels were an inexpensive, nutritious, and readily available food source, for the masses. A perfect way to keep the population content, and the economy moving forward. Today though, it is the Japanese who consume approximately, a staggering 70% of the global eel catch.

FOR COOKING

Eel is a delicious protein which is popular and prized



throughout many Asian countries, from Japan through to Vietnam. In Europe, from Sweden and the Nordic countries through Germany to Italy and Spain. With each country and for that matter region preferring a particular style of preparation, some of which we can touch on here.

As this whole article is titled as smoked Eel we need to firstly mention this element as a gastronomical delicacy. Smoking, as mentioned earlier was predominantly used as a preservation technique. Though today it is a preferred method of consuming the fish, especially in the northern European and Nordic countries. Although there are numerous recipes incorporating this ingredient, a simple slice of rye bread with some astringent pickle such as a cucumber, to help cut through the fattiness. Is to millions the perfect way to satiate an appetite.

The British have for centuries jellied eels, basically cooking eel segments in an aspic stock, then allowing it to set, and eating it cold. In Belgium they are cooked in a green herb sauce, and served with either bread, or fries.

The Japanese, I believe have created an artform out of this simple creature, with the Kabayaki and the Unadon. Kabayaki is a square portion of eel meat, which is skewered, then marinated in a sweet soy based marinade, and grilled till perfectly cooked.

Unadon is fillets of marinated eel, similar to Kabayaki, grilled and served on rice, with a variety of simple toppings. This is my favorite, I find it absolutely delicious, though then again, I just love eel.

In Korea they have a similar style to the Japanese with a dish called Jangeo gui, or grilled eel, where they marinate and grill eel, before serving it on rice. Though the Korean marinade does differ to the Japanese style.

In Vietnam they have a variety of soups made from eel, made with either eel or pork broth, noodles, chili, vegetables and lots of herbs.

Baby eels, known as Elvers, were often eaten by fisherman, as a poor mans food, as it was an inexpensive ingredient. Though today, due to over-fishing Elvers are extremely expensive, and are now considered as a delicacy. They are prepared in many ways though in Spain they are sautéed simply in olive oil with a little garlic and chili. Delicious!

Written by [Kevin Kapusi Starow](#)

Unadon – more than a Japanese delicacy

For me this recipe is a simple and delicious way to pay homage to a beautiful animal, with the simplicity of some common ingredients.

The Japanese value this creature and prize its deliciousness, if that is such a word. The dishes full and correct name is Unagi no Kabayaki. Unagi being the Japanese word for eel. If you get the chance to visit Japan, you will need to visit a restaurant serving this dish. It will be served to you in either a bowl or a lacquered box, accompanied by pickled vegetables, common in Japan. As well as a broth, made predominantly from eel, of course and tasting absolutely delicious.

Traditionally eel was served in Japan with a pepper, Sansyo pepper or spice. This helped to disguise the muddy flavour of the fish. As the Japanese used river

caught eels, they can have a muddy smell and taste to them. Though the addition of this pepper helped to eliminate both the offensive taste and smells.

Though there is no real need for the sansho pepper today, other than tradition, as the eels used in gastronomy are predominantly farmed, and do not have the muddy overtones.

This is a simple recipe, you can make at home for yourself or to help impress that significant other. You should have no issues sourcing many of the ingredients, which you will find at any good Japanese or Asian grocery store.

Happy cooking!



Ingredients

Marinade

240ml	Soy sauce
240ml	Mirin
100gm	Caster Sugar

Eel

400gm	Prepared eel fillet, portioned into 4
400gm	Steamed rice, short grain
100gm	Furikake
1bnch	Spring onion, washed & thinly sliced

Method

Marinade

1. Bring the soy sauce, mirin and sugar to 95c, just below boiling, and allow to tick over for 5 to ten minutes. Making sure the sugars do not overcook on

the sides of the pot.

2. Remove from the heat and allow to cool completely prior to use.

Eel

1. Brush the marinade on the fillets and refrigerate, till cold, repeat this process two more times till each filled has an even lacquering of marinade.
2. Cook the fillets under a grill for several minutes till firm, and cooked through.
3. Serve on a bed of steamed rice with a sprinkle of furikake, and topped with finely sliced spring onion.

Written by [Kevin Kapusi Starow](#)

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